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VOLUME LXVI, NUMBER 20107

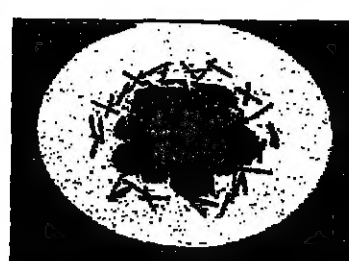
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1998 • KISLEV 28, 5759 • 28 SHAA'BAN 1419

NIS 5.50 (EILAT NIS 4.70)



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battles Cibona

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US, Britain launch attack on Iraq

By ARNOLD SULLIVAN,
DANNA HARMAN,
and news agencies

US President Bill Clinton yesterday ordered a "substantial" military attack against Iraq, the White House said.

"At the direction of the president, United States military forces have launched a substantial military strike against Iraq," White House spokesman Joe Lockhart told reporters late last night.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said in London that British forces were also participating in

the attack on Baghdad.

Anti-aircraft guns opened fire in Baghdad, but no aircraft were immediately sighted or heard over the night skies of the Iraqi capital.

The firing came less than a half hour after an air-raid siren in Baghdad. It was not clear if the firing, which lasted a few minutes, was an indication that US air strikes had begun.

With the news that the bombing was about to begin, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai convened senior IDF officers in Tel Aviv to discuss the situation.

Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu was being updated by the White House, his spokesman, Aviv Bushinsky, said just after midnight.

Channel 1 quoted defense sources as saying that Israel is not involved in the crisis and that Mordechai was being updated on the hot line with US Secretary of Defense William Cohen.

Mordechai told reporters before the US strikes began that "the entire Home Front Command defenses will be deployed the moment we know if an attack is taking place... If it turns out that the United States attacks, and I repeat if, then we

will take the appropriate steps with the onset of the attack," Mordechai said.

Speaking to reporters during a gathering of IDF battalion commanders at Kibbutz Haogen, Clinton faces query timing of attack, Page 2

Mordechai said US weapons and equipment were standing by to help in Israel's defense. He acknowledged that US Marines have been training with anti-Scud US Patriot rockets here

since last week.

"The Marine exercise brought sections of Patriot missile batteries here," Mordechai said. "Complete batteries can be brought here very quickly if there is a need." He added that other items are ready and also could be brought here very quickly.

A congressional source said it is likely the House would postpone today's impeachment vote if Clinton ordered air strikes.

Earlier, Rep. Henry Hyde said, "I think it would be awkward to have an impeachment vote during a bombing in Iraq," he said. Another problem is the approach

of Ramadan this weekend.

At the Pentagon, however, defense officials downplayed these factors.

In Washington, House Speaker Newt Gingrich said an American attack on Iraq would be "the US leading the world by exercising its military power in an appropriate way."

Against the backdrop of an impeachment drive against him on Capitol Hill, Clinton met with Cohen, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and other top national security advisers at the White House just hours after returning from Israel.

After the one-hour meeting, White House officials would not talk about Clinton's intentions on Iraq, but there were abundant signs that preparations for a major military attack were moving ahead rapidly.

Lockhart said Clinton had consulted with US allies, including Blair.

Albright placed calls to foreign ministers of numerous nations, including Russia, which has worked forcefully in recent years to ease Western pressure on Iraq and avert US military strikes.

See IRAQ, Page 2

PM future at Likud helm unsure

ANALYSIS
By DAVID BEN-GURION

Only a few days ago, Communications Minister Limor Livnat was eagerly courted by her friend Ronni Milo, now trying to put together his new centrist list.

Livnat is about as centrist as is Labor's Haim Ramon - on more than one occasion mentioned as a likely Meretz recruit. But he, too, is also eagerly wooed by Milo.

To illustrate the present state of our political arena, Milo's overture was rivaled by another, almost simultaneous, approach to Livnat. Those now trying to set up a new party for the far Right sounded her out about heading their list and running for the premiership against incumbent Benjamin Netanyahu.

Though she declined, Livnat may yet get her chance to challenge Netanyahu on her old Likud turf. Party insiders name her as a leading contender for the prime ministerial nomination. To hear them, she will not be the only one, either.

Pundits have already tossed the name of Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert into the ring, as well as that of MKs Ze'ev Begin (if the yet-to-be-launched rightist party doesn't snap him up) and Dan Meridor (if the yet-to-be launched centrist party does not snap him up). There will be no shortage of additional candidates, judging by the furiously churning Likud rumor mill.

The prediction in the Likud is that a bloody battle for the party leadership will begin as soon as Netanyahu is felled or as soon as he shortens his own term. The mechanism for his downfall is immaterial.

The long, well honed knives will be drawn as soon as new elections are called. The consensus in the Likud is that Netanyahu will not be able to count on an automatic reaffirmation as his party's leader.

The fact that the central committee is packed with his delegates should not lull him into a



Communications Minister Limor Livnat (Brian Henders)

sense of false security. Unlike the well marked factional delineations in Labor, in the Likud all associations and alliances are ad hoc and fluid. Loyal allies may well desert a leader they come to regard as a failure, or, worse, as one who is sure to doom his party to a rout on election day.

The Likud rules, introduced by Netanyahu, mandate primaries if the party leader is challenged. Netanyahu will not be able to escape challenges if he is judged to be weak.

The polls Netanyahu reads can offer him no comfort, including those commissioned privately for him. He has been the most maligned and demonized premier in recent history. This will come hot on the heels of the Wye mess, what is perceived as economic chaos and, worst of all, the odious disintegration of his coalition. If he falls, he can expect no mercy in his own party. It is admitted in most Likud quarters. Once he is no longer seen as an electoral asset, Netanyahu will be beset by old and new foes, all of whom will smell blood.

The internecine war now expected by numerous Likud pessimists could further aggravate the Likud's already inauspicious electoral prospects in the Knesset race. The fear in the Likud is that the current electoral system will reduce the Likud even further.

See LIKUD, Page 2

Netanyahu wants early elections

Unless he can gain support by Monday

By SARAH HOMIG

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced last night he will initiate early elections on Monday if no majority is found for his policies.

"We will go to the nation and ask for a new mandate to achieve a true peace," he said. "I have no intention to chase after anybody. We stand here deeply confident that we are pursuing the right course. Those who agree will join us or we go to early elections. I have no doubt we will win."

Netanyahu spoke after lighting the Hanukkah candles at Likud headquarters in Metzudat Ze'ev. He was followed on the podium by his closest ally of late, Foreign

Minister Ariel Sharon, who explained that "there is no other choice before us, so we might as well go to elections with our heads held high and at our own initiative."

Conspicuously absent at the prime minister's side was Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who had angered Netanyahu by criticizing the decision not to go ahead with further pullbacks under the Wye accord.

Mordechai conferred with Netanyahu prior to the ceremony and called a press conference with political correspondents for this morning, at which he said he would "make an announcement of a political nature."

There was no telling last night when polling day might be scheduled. The Likud prefers April, before the expected unilateral declaration of independence by Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat. The precise date will most probably be worked out in consultations between the two large parties, as has been the tradition.

Before Netanyahu and Sharon made their statements yesterday, a number of high-ranking sources



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (right) and Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon confer during last night's Likud meeting. (AP)

close to Netanyahu had already leaked his decision to advance the elections, ahead of the Monday vote on the opposition's pending early elections bill.

Netanyahu had been expected to call for the establishment of a national unity government, but he stopped short of actually doing so, appealing only for Labor's support.

He defended his policy on Wye, in what was clearly already a campaign speech. He explained that he "refused to tear up the Oslo agreement as some on the Right demanded, but equally refused to carry out more pullbacks without any quid pro quo from the other side, as the Left demands... I know this policy enjoys wide public sup-

port, because it is right and it is necessary."

On Sunday I will bring these policy guidelines to the cabinet for its approval, and on Monday I will ask for the Knesset's support. I call on Labor to back these principles, too. If a sufficient majority is not found, I will initiate early elections to get a renewed mandate from the nation."

Sharon was more blunt. He asserted that "the problem started from inside the coalition... My own relations with the prime minister were not always easy, but one must know when to stop. Some did not halt themselves when the government was in danger."

Sharon was at Netanyahu's side all day yesterday, and the decision to opt for early elections was

reached by them in tandem. It is assumed in the Likud that on Monday Netanyahu will submit to the House the government's own bill on early elections, which will presumably be fused with the opposition's bill.

Both Netanyahu and Sharon, Likud insiders pointed out, outlined their campaign strategy in their speeches. Their line will be to concentrate on the final-status negotiations ahead - especially Jerusalem, permanent borders, settlements, and water resources.

Netanyahu and Sharon will claim that they are best suited to safeguard Israel's interests. They will not yield to right-wing extremists, but Sharon stressed that unlike the Left "we will not make

the minutest concession when Israel's security is at stake. We will not veer the slightest from full reciprocity."

Sources in Netanyahu's office all described him as "fed-up" with attempts to win back the loyalty of individual rebellious coalition MKs and with haggling with various troublesome factions, only to discover that others are seeking to take advantage of the situation and press forward with more demands.

A case in point yesterday was United Torah Judaism, which threatened to vote against the government on Monday if the status quo on religious affairs was not restored forthwith.

See ELECTIONS, Page 2

Courting US, PA stresses it remains committed to Wye

By BEN LYMPFIELD

With their eyes on improving ties with Washington, the top leaders of the Palestinian Authority yesterday condemned the shelving of tomorrow's IDF redeployment, but took pains to avoid any statements or actions that would rescue Israel from the role of rejectionist.

"This is a clear and dangerous

violation of the agreement and I don't think the US administration or President Clinton will agree to it," PA Chairman Yasser Arafat told reporters in Gaza.

PA Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Nabil Shaath, standing by his side, said the Israeli step would not impact on the PA's commitment to the Wye Memorandum.

"We like to make it very clear. We have carried out all our commitments, and we shall continue to carry out our commitments," Shaath said.

Last night PA top negotiator Saeb Erekat blasted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for

charging the PA with violating peace commitments and linked the scrapping of the redeployment in the West Bank with Netanyahu's move toward new elections.

"It is very unfortunate that Netanyahu began his election campaign by stopping the peace process and by exporting blame to Palestinians and fear to Israelis," Erekat said. "For Israel to go to early elections is an internal Israeli issue. We want to make peace with all of Israel. But how could Netanyahu project us in this way after our message two days ago of living side by side?"

See PA, Page 2

Officials: Wye on hold till after elections

By DANNA HARMAN

The implementation of the Wye accord will be put on hold until elections are held, senior officials at the Prime Minister's Office said yesterday.

Even before last night's move towards holding early elections, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had already officially delayed the redeployment, which was to take place tomorrow. He told his cabinet yesterday morning that he could not go on with any withdrawal until the Palestinians fulfilled their commitments.

"Now, even if the Palestinians do fulfill their commitments - which is unlikely to happen in the next two months, or next two decades for that matter - the government will

not redeploy, because it will be involved in running for reelection," said one top official.

At a meeting with US legislators on Sunday, Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon presented a similar theme, telling them that although there would be no official announcement of a freeze, it is unprecedented for a government to continue fulfilling controversial agreements during an election campaign.

Former Prime Minister Shimon Peres, officials at the Prime Minister's Office pointed out, froze the Hebron agreements and halted negotiations when he called for new elections in March 1996.

"We have a clear line that we have been following from the moment we were chosen to lead this country," said Netanyahu, before

announcing that he would most probably be calling early elections.

"I am not ripping up the Oslo agreement or the Wye accords as some people on the right are demanding, and I am not going to go for a redeployment without any return, as some on the left are demanding," said Netanyahu.

"We are committed to the agreements... but we will be working to decrease the withdrawals, protect our security, and stand up for reciprocity... I will not give in to terror, to threats, to pressure, or to violence, because if we give in now... we will no longer be able to live in this country," said Netanyahu, stressing the "peace and security" stance by which he means to satisfy as many voters as possible.

To the sound of applause,

Netanyahu told the supporters gathered at Likud headquarters that he would not release prisoners, and that he would continue insisting that the Palestinians fulfill their commitments. "I know this policy has great support among the people of this country, and the reason for that is that this is the correct policy, the needed one."

Mordechai expressed his opinion earlier in the day regarding the continuation of implementation, reportedly telling the cabinet he believed committee work should be intensified and continued despite the difficulties.

The incitement committee meeting, which had been scheduled for last night, went ahead as planned.

See WYE, Page 2



NEWS

in brief

Report: Israel, Syria ready for talks

Israel and Syria have made "substantial progress" in their unofficial contacts, according to well-placed Israeli sources quoted by the London-based newsletter *Foreign Report*.

The newsletter asserts the two sides are "almost ready" to resume talks. "Netanyahu... thinks that positive signals have been received from the Syrians and that negotiations will begin soon." It says, secret contacts with Syrian officials have been conducted by Netanyahu political advisor Uzi Arad and US businessman Ron Lauder, a Netanyahu confidant.

It added, "there has almost certainly been another round of clandestine talks or contacts between Israelis and Syrians through a secret back-channel." *Douglas Davis*

Settlers seek candidate for PM

The Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea, Samaria and Gaza is preparing a survey it hopes will unite the "national camp" around a single candidate for prime minister, spokeswoman Yehudit Tayar said yesterday. While several candidates, including Communications Minister Limor Livnat, have met with council members, Tayar refused to divulge other names. *Margot Dudkevitch*

Security forces arrest 17 Palestinians

IDF and General Security Service forces arrested 17 Palestinians Tuesday night suspected of participating in hostile activities and clashes in Judea and Samaria. The IDF Spokesman said 14 were from Hameia village near Bethlehem and three were from Katanah near Ramallah. El Khader near Bethlehem and Askar near Nablus. All the villages are in Area B under Israeli security control. *Margot Dudkevitch*

Mordechai may cancel Greece trip

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai is considering canceling his visit to Greece this weekend and will likely put the blame on the security situation, defense sources said. He is to decide this afternoon. Mordechai is scheduled to leave tomorrow for Thessaloniki to mark Hanukka with the Jewish community there. On Sunday he is to fly to Athens for meetings with leaders as guest of his Greek counterpart. Defense sources said that if the trip is called off it would be rescheduled for the near future. Greek diplomatic sources said the trip had been arranged so that Mordechai would be able to make it back in time for the Knesset vote on Monday evening. *Arich O'Sullivan*

Peres: 'Spies' in Cyprus were foiling terrorism

Yigal Damary and Udi Hargov, the two Israelis arrested in Cyprus last month on suspicion of spying, were trying to prevent a terrorist act against Israel, MK Shimon Peres told a news conference in Nicosia yesterday. The two had been trying to foil terrorism when Cyprus police stumbled on them at a fishing village on November 7, Peres said, adding that he fully supports moves to see them released. *Reuters*

Assad meets with US delegation

Syrian President Hafez Assad held talks yesterday with a US delegation led by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) about regional development and bilateral cooperation. Presidential spokesman Ahmad Haddad said Assad and Specter discussed the situation in the Middle East, but gave no details. Assad was leaving for Damascus. Specter, who accompanied President Bill Clinton to Israel, said the president and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu both told him they want to try to resume stalled Syrian-Israeli peace talks. *Reuters*

IRAQ

Continued from Page 1

The report on Iraqi intransigence to the UN from Richard Butler, the chief UN weapons inspector, clearly "raises a serious concern about Iraq's willingness and ability to comply with the commitments they made in mid-November," Lockhart said.

The spokesman said Clinton and his advisers had consulted with members of Congress.

Butler pulled the inspections team out of Iraq earlier yesterday after delivering a report on Tuesday that said Iraq had balked at inspections in at least five instances and did not hand over documents he requested.

He said Iraq's lack of full cooperation made it impossible for inspectors to determine that Baghdad had eliminated its weapons of mass destruction, a key requirement for

lifting stringent UN sanctions imposed in August 1990 after Iraq's troops invaded Kuwait.

Iraq's UN Ambassador Nizar Hamdoun asked UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to dissuade the US and Britain from launching air strikes against his country.

But Hamdoun said his meeting with Annan was an exchange of views and did not result in a new initiative. "It was an exchange of views. There was nothing new to add to the situation," he said.

Hamdoun criticized Butler's report as being politically motivated.

"Obviously there will be those who will question his motives and timing," McCain said in light of the impeachment proceedings. In the Gulf region already are 24,100 US military men and women; 22 ships, eight armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles; and 201 military aircraft, among them 15 Air Force B-52 bombers also equipped with cruise missiles.

could be enough to turn voters away.

A former Likud minister told the Post yesterday that "what happened to the Likud in 1992 may prove to be but a pale preview of the disaster looming now."

Some in the Likud even fear that their party will be cut down to the size of Herut in the 1950s and '60s.

This is why a number of Likud politicians intend to advise Meridor not to look for an alternative political home. If the present party leader loses his image of invincibility, Meridor, Livnat, and Olmert may well have a fighting chance of winning primacy in the Likud after all.

We deeply mourn the passing of my dear wife

RABBANIT BAT-SHEVA HUTNER

an outstanding Woman of Valor who dedicated her entire life to Jewish and Torah Education in the United States and in Israel

The funeral will take place today, Thursday December 17 at 10:30 a.m. at the Sanhedria Cemetery, Jerusalem. Shiva at her home at 18 Rehov Berlin, Jerusalem

Rabbi Yehoshua Hutner and family

Early election fever grips the Knesset

By LIAT COLLINS

By the time Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made his announcement at 8 pm last night on possible early elections, there were just two MKs in the Knesset - Azmi Bishara (Hadash) and Avraham Razerson (United Torah Judaism).

This did not reflect the intense pre-election mood which swept up politicians and the press throughout the day. The only question was what would happen on "Super Monday" when three no-confidence motions are scheduled along with a first reading of the bill calling for the dissolution of the Knesset and early elections.

Lazerson, said that despite entering the Knesset only five weeks ago, he and his party favored early elections because of the erosion in the religious status quo.

Although Netanyahu did not specifically announce expected early elections, most MKs acted as if this was a foregone conclusion.

Meretz leader Yossi Sarid issued a statement saying, "Good riddance to this gov-

ernment which was the worst in the State's history."

Labor MK Haim Ramon, one of the initiators of the early elections bill along with Meretz whip Haim Oron, told reporters that elections would be held April 27 with a second round of voting if necessary on May 11. He said he would meet today with Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak to finalize this.

Oron called on former Chief-of-General-Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak to immediately state his political intentions and criticized Netanyahu's speech as one which would lead to an escalation in the conflict with the Palestinians.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said he would make a statement today.

At lunchtime yesterday, as the journalists and politicians in the crowded Knesset canteen discussed the various scenarios, in walked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu together with Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon.

Nobody was in doubt that the lunch was aimed mainly at being seen in public together.

At a meeting of representatives of Opposition parties, also held in a pre-election mood in the early afternoon, Labor whip Elie Goldschmidt tried to play down all the speculation saying, "I think we must remember that four days in Israeli politics is not like four days anywhere else."

Batsheva Tsor adds: President Ezer Weizman welcomed early elections last night.

"This is the hour of truth and we need elections," Weizman told reporters at Beit Hanassi.

He said that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Opposition leader Ehud Barak should meet and decide a date together. "This is the opportunity for the country's citizens to have their say."

Although Netanyahu is not expected to tender his resignation to Weizman at this point, coalition chairman Meir Shalev is in touch with Beit Hanassi last night to discuss the various options.

Weizman noted that he had come under fire in the summer for suggesting that elections were inevitable once the idea of a ref-

erendum was dropped. "I made this suggestion to the prime minister several times over the past few months," he said. "The reasons were not merely political but also economic and social, the president said. 'Our economy was in an excellent state... Now we have serious problems such as the unemployment rate.'

Asked about the possible effects on the peace process of an interim government and an election campaign, Weizman said that he felt sure that the government would continue to function properly and that Israel's partners, the Palestinians and the US, would be willing to defer decisions if necessary.

"The important thing is not to have a renewed intifada - and an intifada is the result of frustration," he said.

"The PA is not behind the intifada," he said in reply to another question.

Turning to the situation in Iraq, Weizman said: "I have not seen intelligence reports but there is an analogy to our situation. It is a situation in which they can't continue if they are now."

Clinton
foes query
timing of
Iraq attack

By DEBORAH ZABAREWKO

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Just hours before last night's attack was launched, President Bill Clinton's opponents questioned the timing of the US military strike on Iraq, with some hinting at a "Wag the Dog" scenario aimed at diverting attention from an imminent impeachment vote.

"For this sort of thing to seem to come to a head on the eve of an impeachment vote is highly suspicious," Representative Bob Barr said in a comment that stirred memories of the movie satire *Wag the Dog*, in which a fictional president concocts a war to divert attention from an Oval Office dalliance.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott said yesterday he could not back US air raids on Iraq "at this time."

"I cannot support this military action in the Persian Gulf at this time," the Mississippi Republican said. Lott said he had been assured by the administration there was no connection with the impeachment proceedings against Clinton in the House set for today, but added: "Both the timing and the policy are subject to question."

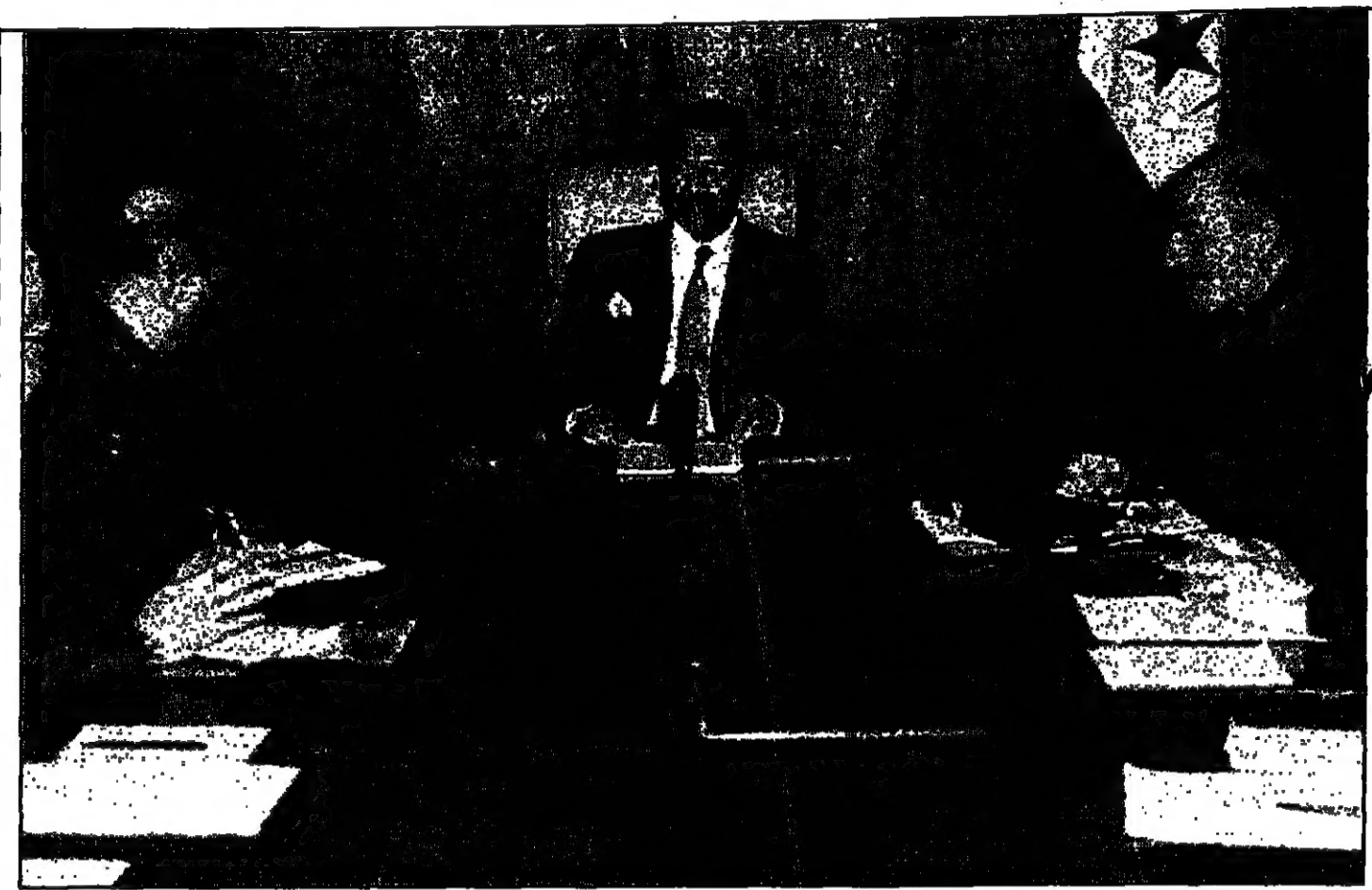
The full House of Representatives was scheduled to vote today on four articles of impeachment against Clinton, but Republican leaders discussed whether to postpone the vote in anticipation of military action. Even that idea elicited skepticism.

Representative Henry Hyde of Illinois, the Republican who presided over the committee that brought the impeachment counts to the House floor, discounted the "Wag the Dog" scenario.

"I don't think it's a cynical ploy," Hyde said when asked about the timing of the latest Iraq crisis.

The House Judiciary Committee voted last week to approve four articles of impeachment - two counts of perjury and one each of obstruction of justice and abuse of power - sending the matter to the full House.

If the full House approves impeachment, the Senate will hold a trial to determine if Clinton should be removed from office.



Saddam Hussein in a joint meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council and the ruling Baath party yesterday to discuss ways to confront a possible US airstrike. (Reuters)

Expert: State of peace process plays a part in Saddam's calculations

By DAVID RUDGE

The state of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians plays a part in the calculations of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in initiating new crises, according to Middle East affairs expert Prof. Gabriel Ben-Dor.

"Saddam is using this present moment to cause trouble, not over the weakness of the US President because of his domestic difficulties, but because of Clinton's visit to the region which once again highlighted the Israeli-Palestinian statement," said Ben-Dor.

"When attention is diverted from Iraq to other parts of the Middle East, that is when he tries to get away with murder, by trying to ease the inspection regime or attempting to show that he is defying those Western allies that don't put pressure on Israel, only on him," Ben-Dor, professor of Political Science and Middle Eastern Studies at Haifa University, maintained that Saddam had on several occasions used the peace process deadlock in an effort to win the sympathy of Arab States and the international community for what he describes as unjust US pressure on Iraq.

"This has been a relatively successful ploy on Saddam's part so far. He uses the Israeli-Palestinian difficulties to try and show that US pressure on him is unfair because Israel, according to him, is an even greater culprit and is not getting that kind of treatment," said Ben-Dor.

"Had there been more movement and more success in breaking the Israeli-Palestinian stalemate this would not have been an opportune moment for Saddam to defy the UN weapons inspectors and he probably would not have done so."

"Saddam is testing the limits of what he can get away with and he has been getting away with an awful lot recently. I don't think he will defy (the allies) on a major issue. He is not going to reject the entire regime of inspection or stop cooperation with the appropriate UN agencies and commissions."

"He is, however, sabotaging the work of the inspectors in the field and trying to subvert their routine. He is making the entire exercise pointless simply by forcing them to face endless constraints and pitfalls," Ben-Dor maintained that despite the problems the UN

weapons inspectors were helping to restrain Saddam by forcing him to resort to subterfuge and do things surreptitiously.

"The work of the inspectors slows him down and prevents him going full steam ahead, explicitly and openly, with his projects and plans for developing weapons of mass destruction."

"Nevertheless, the work of the inspectors is becoming very difficult and a good part of what they do has become meaningless because they don't have the right conditions for their work."

"If he is allowed to survive, he will continue in the same way as before. This has been his pattern and modus operandi and this has been his character virtually since he came to power 18 years ago."

"The Western allies have to make a decision whether to take a more resolute step towards a more open confrontation with Saddam and his regime and trying to get rid of him with more activism and involvement than has been the case so far. If not this pattern of provocation will continue until Saddam feels he can defy the allies more openly."

ELECTIONS

Continued from Page 1

Netanyahu has told his aides, according to the reports, that the entire process of trying to find a slender majority for his beleaguered coalition has become degrading and useless in the long run. Even if he manages to beat the heavy odds and somehow survive on Monday, he will only face the same difficulties at the end of the month when the budget vote is scheduled.

Netanyahu held a number of meetings with close aides and advisers yesterday and concluded that his coalition is in hopeless condition. At this point, the MKs and ministers are already treating it as a sinking ship, a fact which

encourages undisciplined conduct.

The sources cited Mordechai's case as the straw which broke Netanyahu's back. Mordechai's advocacy of early elections and intimations threats to possibly quit the government reportedly outraged the prime minister.

He was especially incensed by the fact that Mordechai based his stance on criticism of the government's position on Wye. Some sources close to Netanyahu said Mordechai's words place the onus for the Wye failure not on the Palestinians, who failed to live up to their undertakings, but on Netanyahu for refusing to turn a blind eye to Palestinian violations of the Wye terms.

Netanyahu's spokesman later said these pronouncements were not approved by the prime minister.

Sources close to Mordechai were quick to complain that "Netanyahu's aides have of late been issuing many declarations from which Netanyahu then dissociated himself."

This was seen as a widening rift between the prime minister and his defense minister and many around Netanyahu said it could not be repaired. Mordechai had reportedly taken umbrage because Sharon had replaced him as the effective No. 2 in the cabinet. Hints that Mordechai might quit the government continued before Netanyahu's aides leaked the news that he would agree to early elections.

The feud with Mordechai came alongside the stinging resignation of Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman, made official yesterday with a fax dispatched from

Switzerland proclaiming his resignation.

More and more ministers have joined the swelling ranks of cabinet members who advocate early elections. Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav was the latest yesterday.

In such circumstances, Netanyahu stood no chance of attracting any outside support for his crumbling coalition. Not wanting to be brought ignominiously down, Netanyahu has decided, according to sources in his office, to announce that he too will support the early elections bill.

His attitude now, said one aide, is that "if you can't lick them, join them."

Some doubters in the Likud still cautioned last night that all this might be nothing but yet another Netanyahu scare maneuver and that he may reverse a decision he

has not formally admitted to having made. But closer to Netanyahu the opinion was that this time it is for real.

UTJ is expected to withdraw the no-confidence motion it tabled with Netanyahu's agreement earlier in the month in order to postpone voting on the early elections bill. Netanyahu does not want to be felled by a no-confidence vote. However if the motion is not pulled back and the government loses, elections will have to be held in 60 days.

Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak yesterday suggested June as a likely time for elections. Many in his party took him severely to task for this, charging he is giving Netanyahu too much time to repair damage to his image and to recoup losses of right-wing support.

so if the deadlock persists. *Reuters contributed to this report.*

WYE

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, somewhat diverging reports were given to the cabinet yesterday by the heads of the General Security Service and Military Intelligence regarding the Palestinian Authority's possible reaction to such a setback to the peace process. While both GSS chief Ami Ayalon and OC Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Amos Malka agreed that the freeze would serve to increase tension

and violence in the West Bank, they disagreed on how much the PA could do to stop it.

Ayalon reportedly said that the PA is not in control of Palestinian demonstrations in the West Bank, whereas Malka indicated the PA is the driving force behind them. Both Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz and Netanyahu reportedly trust Malka's assessment more than Ayalon's. In any case, said Netanyahu's communications adviser David Bar-Ilan, the government has no intention of giving in to violence of any kind.

150 من الاموال

Opposition MKs lash out at PM

By NINA GILBERT

Election campaigning was already under way in the Knesset yesterday, when MKs lashed out in the plenum over the implications of US President Bill Clinton's visit.

Opposition MKs blasted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policies, saying they resulted in sending Clinton home empty-handed.

Deputy Minister Michael Eitan, the government's liaison in the Knesset, responded to the criticism by asking: "What alternative does the Labor Party have to offer — a return to car bombings and a terrible rift in the nation?"

MK Haim Ramon said the last remaining supporters of Netanyahu should have reached the conclusion after the Clinton visit that he "is not worthy of being prime minister."

Ramon told hecklers from the Right, including MK Ruby Rivlin (Likud) that they would be better off with Ehud Barak as prime minister, because then they would not have to "have split personalities" of supporting a prime minister and also undermining him.

Eitan said that only someone "suicidal" would buy a safety net from Ramon.

MK Ran Cohen (Meretz) said the only one who was happy to see Clinton here was Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat. "Bibi was dying to see him leave, since he was afraid he would have to agree to another withdrawal. Not only the peace process was humiliated, but a neighbor was as well," Cohen also denounced



Opposition factions confer in the Knesset yesterday.

Netanyahu as a "liar," sparking indignation from Likud MK Doron Shmueli, who called it an act of incitement.

MK Naomi Blumenthal (Likud) said Clinton came to help the

process, but tried to impose a reality of peace in the region that does not exist.

The Third Way's Emmanuel Zissmann said there would be "early elections before May 4."

MK Nissan Slomiansky (National Religious Party) said Netanyahu had made a "terrible mistake" by bringing the US in as a judge in the peace process.

Shas MK Raphael Pinhasi, on

the other hand, praised Netanyahu for his obstinacy in demanding the Palestinian National Council annul the articles in its charter hostile to Israel. "We can't have a one-way agreement."

Neeman faxes letter of resignation

By DAVID ZEV HARRIS

After fewer than 18 months in the job, Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman yesterday faxed a letter of resignation to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from Switzerland stating that only "wide national consensus can generate a stable economic policy."

Neeman attacked politicians throughout the coalition for forgetting about the greater good of the country and only caring about their narrow interests.

These comments come as it appears increasingly unlikely that the 1999 state budget will be approved as scheduled by December 31, leaving the country dependent on a heavily reduced public spending package, with a possibility that welfare payments could be cut, according to Treasury officials.

The political bedlam of the last few weeks has allowed the key economic issues of the day to be discarded, wrote Neeman.

"In a situation whereby the coalition has stopped functioning and each MK is playing his own game, and where the public purse is becoming openly accessible to each MK, faction or party... only a wide, true, national consensus can bring about a responsible rationale, free of personal interests," Neeman stated.

On holiday in the Alps, Neeman is expected to return tonight, having broken his right hand while skiing. The resignation takes effect after 48 hours.

Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel last night expressed his sorrow over Neeman's decision. The two have been close allies, with Neeman frequently defending the central bank's monetary policy despite his own civil servants' strong opposition to the bank's tight monetary policy. Frenkel described the news as an economic "earthquake" (see story, Page 13).

The financial markets reacted calmly yesterday, with the shekel depreciating a mere 2 percent and the Tel Aviv 100 Index actually rising slightly. However, one senior Bank of Israel official warned that any shift to fiscal expansion ahead of elections would be seen by the markets as a very negative sign and they would react accordingly.

Throughout the day, economists and businesspeople said they were saddened by Neeman's departure, feeling that he was truly dedicated to improving the economy and had been free of any political obligations. That, however, was also Neeman's downfall, according to Knesset Finance Committee chairman Avraham Ravitz (United Torah Judaism).

Netanyahu's economic U-turn

Consider this:

During an aggregate 39 years in power (including unity governments), Labor has had seven finance ministers, while the Likud is about to send its tenth man to the Treasury in a total of 17 years in power.

In other words, Labor treasurers lasted on average well more than five years in office while their Likud counterparts repeatedly ran out of steam after less than two years in office.

Why? Because Labor traditionally had a clear, albeit disastrous, economic agenda, the gist of which was tax and spend. The Likud, however, was, and remains trapped between Milton Friedmanite ideologies and proletarian voters.

Whether because of or regardless of this political schizophrenia, Likud has failed time and again in its efforts to single-handedly reinvent the Israeli economy; such was the case with Simcha Ehrlich's colossal currency liberalization in 1977, Yigael Hurvitz's undelivered budget reform of 1980, Yoram Aridor's failed supply-side economics in 1981, and now Yaakov Neeman's abortive tax reform of 1998.

The shining exception to all these was the late Yitzhak Moda'i. Being the shrewd, experienced and worldly businessman he was, the economic conservative tipped the scale in favor of the 1985 austerity plan, which he largely masterminded. The rest of Likud's cabinet ministers, however, followed the populist half of their hearts, and voted against the plan which ultimately defeated hyper-inflation.

Now all this history is repeating itself, in earnest, within Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's soul, and at the worst timing possible.

During his first two years in office, Netanyahu was much the MIT-educated free marketeer he had professed to be throughout his political career. In 1996 he cut the budget by a hefty NIS 7.2 billion, the following year he sold Bank Hapoalim, Israel's largest business entity, this year he lifted most currency restrictions, and until recently he backed the Bank of Israel's tight monetary policy.

ANALYSIS

By NINA GILBERT

Indeed, so conservative was Netanyahu's economics that his pretext for ousting his first treasurer, Dan

Meridor, was the latter's inclination to expand the budget and weaken the shekel.

Now Netanyahu is once again parting ways with a finance minister, only this time the roles have reversed: Neeman is urging a suddenly weak-shekel-big-budget premier to rally support for a relatively tight budget as well as an anti-statist tax reform.

Neeman's conservative budget has become a thorn in Netanyahu's populist side, because it deprives him of the resources with which to launch the kind of favoritist economics that both Likud and Labor are known to excel at come election season.

Neeman's tax reform, which sought to abolish some NIS 20b. worth of breaks and exemptions while curbing the middle class's tax burden, was a sore in Netanyahu's big-business eye, because it meant confronting a host of corporate-welfare clients who have grown accustomed, during half-a-century of socialist-inspired norms, to see tax-payer money build, operate and ultimately bail out dubious business projects through the Trade and Industry Ministry's lavish capital-aid grants.

In failing to stand by the no-nonsense Neeman, who naively sought to translate his boss's high Thatcherist talk into deeds, the prime minister has joined the old Likud fold of short-term, short-ordered and short-sighted economics.

Set against this backdrop, one clearly understands what Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel meant by saying Neeman's resignation is an earthquake.

Netanyahu's failure to pass the budget and the arrangements bill even through a first reading a mere two weeks before the December 31 deadline, while signaling a willingness, if not a desire, to embark on some serious election-bribery spending, would be alarming even if there were no global financial mayhem and a local labor crisis. Apparently, these problems are dwarfed by that of the prime minister's own job security.

Committee to discuss bills relating to election

By LIAT COLLINS

The Knesset Law Committee, chaired by Haim Porat (NRP), is scheduled to discuss on Tuesday several bills relating to the elections.

The bills have all passed preliminary reading and need to be readied for first reading.

The discussion of the bills will take on added significance coming the day after the first reading of the early elections bill scheduled to be voted on in the plenum.

The bills are:

• A proposal to cut from 100 days to 50 the required "cooling-off" period for senior IDF officers wanting to run in an election campaign. The bill was submitted by Yael Dayan (Labor).

• A proposal that would allow citizens abroad to vote in the elec-

tions. The bill was submitted by Roman Bronfman (Yisrael Ba'aliya) and Ruby Rivlin (Likud).

• A proposal that would allow the courts to extend beyond the current 14-day period appeals on the election results if there is reasonable doubt that they were fraudulently achieved. The bill was submitted by Ra'anan Cohen (Labor).

• A proposal that polling slips be translated into Russian and Amharic. The bill was submitted by Zvi Weinberg (Yisrael Ba'aliya).

• A proposal which would prevent non-government organizations from publishing material during an election period which could be seen as election propaganda. The bill was submitted by Nissim Zvilli (Labor).



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Shoval: US should stop economic aid if PA declares independence

By HILLEL KUTTLER

The US should cut off economic aid to the Palestinians if Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat declares statehood next May, Ambassador to the US Zalmay Shoval said yesterday.

Israel would also withhold all economic assistance to the PA, including transferring customs and tax receipts, and would not admit daily workers into Israel, he added. Shoval further stated that President Bill Clinton's visit to Gaza is likely to backfire for the peace process by hardening Palestinian positions in negotiations with Israel, thereby creating a "lose-lose situation."

Looking backwards, he said, perhaps Israel should have foreseen during the Wye River talks the ramifications of Clinton's historic visit and the boost it would provide to the PA's intentions to establish a state.

If the Palestinians declare statehood, "the whole peace process ... would unravel" and "it would of course be the Palestinians who would pay the dearest price - and immediately," Shoval said in his Export Investment Corporation office in Tel Aviv. He returns to Washington on Saturday night.

"Not only would Israel have to resort to unilateral acts on its own, but ... Palestinian workers would not be able to come to work in Israel, [and] I would not rule out the possibility that economic aid from the US would stop. And though

other nations may continue to support the Palestinians financially and diplomatically, the Palestinian economy would hardly be sustainable without the close connection with Israel and the US."

"I would hope that [cutting off aid] is something the US would consider ... but more important, the US has a role to make clear to the Palestinians that going ahead with a unilateral declaration of independence would be detrimental mainly to themselves," he said.

Shoval said he does not now intend to lobby the administration or Congress on the aid matter, voicing the hope that final-status negotiations progress well.

Shoval met Tuesday with Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman to discuss progress toward procuring \$1.2 in American aid to cover the costs of the troop redeployments under the Wye agreement. Washington will likely deliver the funds to Israel, as well as the "several hundred million dollars" Clinton pledged to the Palestinians, over a three-year period, Shoval said.

Neeman's subsequent resignation should have no effect on Israel's receiving the aid, since "the principles have been worked out" and can now be handled by other officials.

Asked whether Israeli retribution would include withholding receipts collected from Palestinians and ceasing to provide risk insurance to Israeli companies investing in the territories, Shoval responded: "Of course it would stop. Look, [statehood] would be an illegal and

aggressive act, and it would immediately annul all the existing agreements between Israel and the PA. This would happen ipso-facto under international law."

Shoval said he is unconcerned about the precedent such a move would set as a lever that Washington could later use against Israel if it violates agreements.

"There is an important difference," he said. "Nowhere in the agreements is settlement activity prohibited, but a declaration of statehood is."

Clinton's visit to Gaza may benefit the peace process, but could backfire if the Palestinians "make the mistake of reading into [it] more than was actually in it."

"Although I am absolutely certain that this is not the intention, nor could it be, of the US government, the Palestinians may believe - falsely, I would add - that they not only have completely and permanently changed their status in the eyes of the American public and especially the US Congress, but that they have already been accorded something like acquiescence in their bid for statehood."

"The reason I'm saying this is if that is the perception of the Palestinians, and there are some indications that it might be, they will become even less amenable to negotiating in good faith with Israel."

But Washington has "not necessarily" drawn closer to the PA at Israel's expense as a result of the Gaza visit, Shoval said.



Life Line

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shows the cabinet room yesterday to children from Kav LeChaim (Life Line), an organization devoted to caring for sick children, especially those with cancer, cerebral palsy, or muscular dystrophy. (Flash 90)

Settlers warned of likely new violence

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

OC Judea and Samaria Brig-Gen Yitzhak Eitan told reporters yesterday that the army treats stone-throwing incidents with the same seriousness as terrorist attacks.

Eitan spoke while visiting border policeman Elhanan Hovev who suffered a head injury during clashes on Saturday in the Bethlehem area and also Dalia Makmiel, who received facial injuries when her car was stoned on the Gush Etzion tunnel road near Bethlehem on Saturday. Both are at Hadassah Hospital in Ein Karem.

Yehudit Tayar, spokeswoman of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, said settlers have been informed by the IDF that violence will escalate and preparations must be made.

Special settler teams have been set up. How to deal with attacks and relocating children to other communities have also been discussed.

While settlers continue to reject IDF proposals to add defensive measures in their communities they demand that the IDF beef up its presence on the highways and roads leading to the communities.

"The IDF must take the initiative

and serve as a deterrent," Tayar said, adding that it was common knowledge that the Palestinians have been stockpiling weapons.

Tayar said the lull in violent clashes during President Clinton's visit occurred because US officials asked the Palestinians to curb violence during his stay.

"Such a request shows they realize the PA is orchestrating the violence, so why do they pressure the Israeli government into granting further concessions? Why do they ignore the continual incitement directed at settlers and the large numbers of weapons the Palestinians have stockpiled?" She said, the council has

received many concerned calls from settlers, especially since Wye.

David Zev Harris adds: The Knesset Finance committee yesterday approved the transfer of NIS 20 million to the territories and a further NIS 7.5m. for the Golan.

Following the vote, opposition MKs accused the government of attempting to buy votes of right-wing MKs and Third-Way members. Ophir Pines-Paz (Labor) said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is now moving down this track having failed to gain support during talks with individual MKs.

Turkish sailors rescued off Haifa coast

By DAVID RUDGE

The nine-man crew of a small Turkish freighter was plucked to safety from the sea yesterday when their vessel sprang a leak and sank rapidly less than a half a nautical mile off the Haifa coast.

The captain of the *Duculer 2* had earlier sent out an urgent Mayday call after water started flooding the engine room. The call was picked up by coastal police, and a boat with a three-man crew

went to the aid of the stricken vessel, reaching it in minutes from its mooring in Haifa Port.

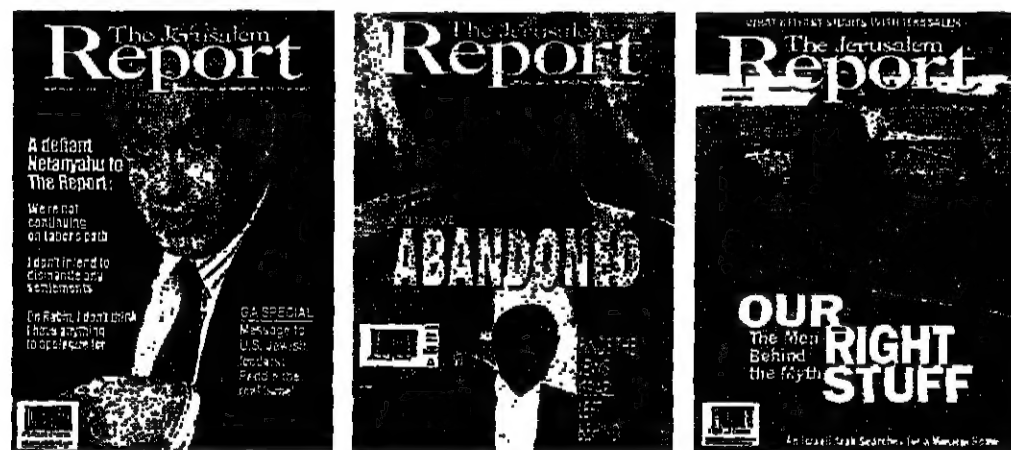
By then the water had already reached the vessel's upper deck, and the crew was lining the rails wearing life jackets, ready to abandon ship. The police boat crew instructed the Turkish sailors to lower and board the ship's life raft, fearing that if they approached too close their own boat might be sucked under when it went down.

Within minutes of the life boat being towed clear, the *Duculer 2* disappeared beneath the waves.

The drama was witnessed by scores of people lining the Bat Galim promenade and dozens watching from near the lighthouse at Stella Maris on Mt. Carmel.

The 1,000-ton ship was en route from Haifa to Ashdod with a cargo of 950 tons of cement. It was not clear what caused the leak. The Transport Ministry is investigating.

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Child stuck in toy box prompts ministry to seek changes in design

By JUDY SIEGEL

The Ministry of Industry and Trade's director of standardization will "look into" a recent incident in which a five-year-old Jerusalem boy was locked into a plastic storage box by a friend and released scared but unharmed by his parents, who feared he would have suffocated to death if they had not reached him on time.

The ministry's Grisha Deutsch said he would consult with experts from the Israel Standards Institution and elsewhere about whether the two tiny airholes and four plastic locking clasps on the box's cover would pose any danger to children shut inside it.

"There are no Israeli standards for such products," Deutsch said, "but it wouldn't cost anything for the company to make the air holes larger, just to make sure no tragedy could occur."

He added that the ministry had not received any reports about children's injuries caused by the storage chest.

Deutsch agreed to consult

experts after the incident was brought to his attention by *The Jerusalem Post*, which received a letter from David and Julie Morris, the parents of five young children in Jerusalem's Pisgat Ze'ev quarter.

Recently, the father was "horrified" when he popped his head into the family play room to find that his son Yonatan, weighing 17 kilos, was trapped in a plastic toy storage chest.

His friend, also five, had sealed the wheeled box - (53 centimeters long, 27 wide and 29 high) - and left the room, leaving Yonatan screaming for help.

David Morris noted that the boxes, manufactured by the Z.A.G. company in the Tel Aviv area, had air holes smaller in diameter than that of a drinking straw and lacked a warning notice about children's using them. He added that the US government recalled 100,000 plastic storage chests made by the Iris company in the US earlier this year, because they lacked a lid-support device and adequate ventilation when the

lid was closed, and had exterior latches to secure the lids - even though no cases of death or injury had been reported.

The Iris chest warned: "Do Not Climb In Trunk." The Z.A.G. storage chest, model 15001 and called "Roll and Store Box" and marked with a picture of tools, was used by the Morris family for storing toys.

"We have made large holes in the top to prevent anything dangerous from happening in the future. It's impossible to prevent a child from getting in; we can't watch every child at once," said Morris.

The Z.A.G. spokesman, Ran Rahav, said that the chest was "not hermetically sealed, and it has two air holes below the lid to prevent suffocation. Even when the lid is locked with the four clips, it doesn't seal out the air."

The spokesman added that the company's products have met the rigorous standards of the Consumer Testing Laboratories in the US, which also considered the matter of sealing, and meets the international standard ISO 9002.

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שכר מן הארץ

Court halts immigrants' deportation

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

A temporary injunction was issued yesterday by the High Court of Justice forbidding the Interior Ministry from deporting two individuals whose immigrant status and citizenship, respectively, were revoked.

The two cannot be deported until their case receives a fair hearing by the court, Justice Ya'acov Terkel ruled.

According to a spokesman for the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), the two had their status revoked without any explanation and without being allowed to present their case.

The petition was filed against the Interior Ministry and the director of the Population

Registry by ACRI several weeks ago.

The petition also asked that the Interior Ministry and the head of the Population Registry see to it that proper procedures are followed before citizenship or immigrant status is revoked. The petition claimed the ministry and registry acted illegally and failed to grant the two a fair hearing.

The first case involved Andre Malish, the son of a Jewish mother and Christian father, who immigrated from Ukraine in 1994, and was given an immigrant's certificate at the airport. Three months later he was asked to come fill out forms at the Foreign Ministry, in which he noted his religion as Christian.

After living here for 2 1/2 years as an immigrant, but without an identity card, he joined

the army in 1996. After completing basic training with honors, he sought security clearance and was told he needed to complete his citizenship application because he wanted to go into an elite unit.

He was then told by the Interior Ministry that he could not receive citizenship because he was a Christian and was subsequently informed he would be stripped of his immigrant status because he received it under false pretenses.

The second case involved a woman who immigrated from the former Soviet Union in 1990 and received citizenship under the Law of Return, since her father was Jewish. In February of this year she went to a Holon Population Registry office to change her

address in her identity card.

Clerks there told the shocked woman that her card was being confiscated because she was a member of the neo-Nazi party Pamyat, and not Jewish. She was not given a hearing and repeated requests by her to get the card back proved fruitless, although she insisted she'd never belonged to Pamyat or any other neo-Nazi party, and considered herself Jewish.

Since the authority to revoke citizenship rests with the Interior Minister and not with the courts, even more care must be taken to ensure a fair process, ACRI's lawyer Anat Shkolnikov said.

An Interior Ministry spokeswoman said the ministry would present its version of events.



Happy birthday

Minnie Mouse, here on a visit with Mickey to celebrate their 70th birthdays, greets children yesterday in the capital's Jerusalem Mall.

Man gets three years for beating up judge

By HEIDI J. GLEIT

Meir Levy was sentenced to three years' imprisonment yesterday for assaulting Haifa District Court Judge Menahem Ne'eman last month.

Levy, who has 17 previous convictions for violent offenses or insulting lawyers, confessed to beating Ne'eman, who had to be taken to Haifa's Carmel Hospital to be treated for light injuries.

Levy showed up at the court on November 3 with a large stone and planned to assault a number of judges, but security guards stopped him after he attacked Ne'eman.

Tel Aviv District Court Judge Oded Mudrik sentenced Levy to three years' imprisonment plus 18 months suspended if he commits any violent or criminal acts within three years of being released from prison.

"I am not sure if it is possible to characterize this as a phenomenon of violence against judges in the State of Israel," Mudrik said.

Bar Association spokesman Yitzhak Tunik said yesterday he is satisfied with the sentence.

NEWS

in brief

Jihad prisoners in Jenin start hunger strike

Islamic Jihad militants in Jenin said yesterday they had launched a hunger strike to protest against their detention.

In a statement to reporters they said eight of them had begun the strike because they had been held without trial since Israel and the Palestinians signed the Wye accord.

The head of Jenin military prison, where the detainees are being held, told Reuters "some 10" Islamic Jihad members had begun what he called a "partial hunger strike." Reuters

Police may check reporter's eavesdropping

Police may check whether Army Radio reporter Hadas Stieff eavesdropped on police commanders' conference calls, but cannot use the records of her phone conversations for any other purpose, a Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court judge said yesterday.

Stieff complained after two policemen told her they had been asked why their phone numbers appeared on a list called from Stieff's cellular phone, her lawyer Gabby Doron said.

A third policeman told Stieff police are considering using the list to learn who her sources are, Doron told the court.

Stieff confessed last week to giving Army Radio crime reporter Yairiv Ben-Yehuda the code to access the daily conference call between Tel Aviv area police commanders.

Heidi J. Gleit

Beduin students in Negev to strike tomorrow

More than 30,000 pupils will stay home from school today and dozens of schools in Beduin communities in the Negev will be closed to protest what leaders of the community say are the lack of budgets provided for implementation of a five-year plan to improve conditions in those schools.

The funds have not been forthcoming despite Education Minister Yitzhak Levy's promise to adopt the recommendations of a committee established to look into the matter and to implement them in this year's budget. Dr. Awad Abu Frieck, spokesman for the Struggle to Implement the Report on the Arab Education System in the Negev, charged yesterday.

Aryeh Dean Cohen

Court: State must fund technology students

The High Court of Justice yesterday gave the state until December 28 to find a way to fund the continued studies of some 3,000 pupils at several technological school networks, including the Amal I network.

The court was responding to a petition filed by the schools demanding that the Treasury transfer funds to the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry for this purpose to prevent the firing of teachers and the removal of hundreds of pupils. The petition was filed against the Education, Labor and Social Affairs, and Finance ministries.

Aryeh Dean Cohen

Ministries unprepared for Y2K bug

By JUDY SIEGEL

Only seven government ministries have so far reported on their plans for coping with the 2000 computer bug, even though the cabinet decided last July that they must do so by September 1, it was revealed yesterday.

MK Alex Lubotzky, chairman of the Knesset Science and Technology Committee's subcommittee on the 2000 bug, sharply criticized Prime Minister's Office Director-General Moshe Leon for failing to attend the meeting. "I previously asked the prime minister to appoint a person on the ministerial level to an authoritative position dealing with the 2000 bug. Any inadequate handling of computer systems poses a threat to normal economic activity in the public and private sector, and we must prepare for an emergency situation."

The 2000 bug involves the possible failure of computers to cope with the four new digits of the new millennium; most computer systems were designed to register years by only their last two digits. Experts fear that unless computer systems are reprogrammed, at great cost, vital devices will not work on January 1, 2000.

National Infrastructure Ministry Director-General Ya'acov Katz was faulted at the meeting when it became known that his ministry had not taken the 2000 bug threat seriously. The ministry controls many systems whose failure to function properly in the 21st century would add to the domino effect and cause a crisis. MKs said.

Blumenthal, Burg criticize antisemitic remarks by Russian

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

Following the most recent antisemitic statement made by a member of the Russian parliament, Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee Chairman Naomi Blumenthal yesterday called on Russian Jews "to pack your things and immigrate to Israel. This is your home and where you will be safe."

Blumenthal said the statement was "another link in the chain of antisemitic incidents increasing in severity and in who is saying them. If the last remark was made by a junior member of parliament, we've gone up the ladder to the chairman of the parliamentary security committee."

She was reacting to remarks made by Viktor Ilyukhin, the head of the Russian parliament's security affairs committee, before a parliamentary panel considering impeachment of Yeltsin, in which he charged reforms carried out by the Yeltsin government was tantamount to genocide perpetrated against the Russian people.

"The large-scale genocide wouldn't have been possible if Yeltsin's inner circle had con-

sisted of the main ethnic groups, and not exclusively of one group, the Jews," he said.

Jewish Agency Chairman Avraham Burg also criticized Ilyukhin for his remarks, saying such statements will ultimately only hurt the Russian people themselves.

"Societies in which there is hatred are societies where ultimately there will be internal bloodshed, and it doesn't matter who the target of the hatred is," Burg said.

Despite the seriousness of the statement, Burg said the phenomenon of Russian antisemitism was still largely political in nature.

"I am not at all convinced that there has been any change in the feelings on the street in the former Soviet Union, but there has been a change in the political organization. A significant element of nationalism or right-wing behavior, or even antisemitism, has become part of many attempts at political organization. This is why we must pay close attention to statements made in the political arena," Burg said.

Meanwhile, Russian business

tycoon Boris Berezovsky yesterday called for banning the Communist Party.

Berezovsky said the government should use force to get rid of the Communists if it needs to.

"The later they use force the more blood will be shed," Berezovsky said, according to the Interfax news agency. "Such people as Ilyukhin and Makashov should sit in the dock, and not in the Duma."

"When I said that the first time, the president and the government didn't see that the Communist Party has placed itself outside the law of the civilized world," Berezovsky said.

Members of the liberal Yabloko faction called yesterday for a resolution denouncing Ilyukhin's statement, but parliament did not immediately act on the proposal.

Unrepentant after his statements, Ilyukhin responded to the motion by accusing liberals of fueling antisemitism in Russia.

"What kind of democracy is it when a Russian man can't speak the truth," he said.

News agencies contributed to this report.

Expert: Ilyukhin's comments could find greater audience

While not a new phenomenon, the tone of antisemitic remarks in Russia has grown sharper and may fall on more attentive ears coming from a senior parliamentarian like Viktor Ilyukhin, an Israeli expert on antisemitism in the Russian press said yesterday.

Dr. Stefani Hoffman, director of the Hebrew University's Mayrock Center for Russian, Eurasian and East European Research, said the current statements are "part of a process which goes back to the period of perestroika and glasnost."

Hoffman noted that the liberalization during that period allowed Jews to study Hebrew or practice their religion, but also "opened Pandora's box of so-called freedom of expression which opened the way for rather sharp antisemitic expressions both in the press and in public demonstrations, which did not occur in the Soviet period."

"So in fact this is part of a process that has been going on for the past decade, where on the one hand you have greater freedom, and on the other you can demon-

strate publicly calling for all the Jews to be killed, or sent to Siberia, or whatever you want, or to publish any of Hitler's works, and to get away with it, despite the fact that there are provisions in the civil codes against inciting racial or any other kind of religious hostility. The legal organs have almost never prosecuted anybody, even when it would seem to you and to me to be perfectly clear that a case should be brought to trial.

Aryeh Dean Cohen

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PUBLIC TENDER NO. C4030063

SUPER HIGH VOLTAGE ELECTRICAL SUB-STATION

The Israel Airports Authority (IAA) hereby requests Proposals from qualified Offerors meeting the below listed Pre-Conditions for the Construction of a Super High Voltage Electrical Sub-Station for the Ben Gurion 2000 Project. The issue of this Tender follows Public Tender No. C4030054 which was cancelled by the IAA Tender Committee. The Work of this Contract generally includes managing and performing the supply, installation, and maintenance services during and following the Warranty Period, of high-voltage cable, transformers, switchgear, electrical terminations and/or splices, and all other components for a complete, operable High Voltage electrical sub-station.

Preliminary Mandatory Requirements: This list summarizes the Pre-Conditions for an Offeror's Proposal to be considered by the IAA. Only the complete language of the Pre-Conditions as stated in the RFP is binding. This text may be obtained by written request, submitted on company letterhead, to the PMF facsimile number stated below.

- Offeror shall be registered under Classification of Group A, Branch 160, Type 5 (Unlimited) under the State of Israel Registration of Contractors for Construction Works (Classification of Registered Contractors) 1988. A foreign Offeror shall comply with the requirements of Exhibit A, Part II of the RFP.
- Offeror's minimum annual revenue in each of the last three (3) years was not less than the equivalent of Ten Million U.S. Dollars (\$10 Million).
- Offeror's records must indicate, for each of the last three (3) years, the cost paid directly for labor for at least sixty (60) persons (annual average).
- Offeror has a minimum of six (6) years of High-Voltage Electrical Construction experience and has constructed and completed at least two (2) 161kV substations within the last five (5) years.
- Offeror shall meet the staffing and personnel experience requirements specified in the RFP, Exhibit A.
- Offeror shall meet the registration requirements for a legal entity stated in the RFP, Exhibit A.
- Offeror shall meet the VAT and Israeli Tax Authorities' registration requirements stated in the RFP, Exhibit A.
- Offeror shall provide an unconditional Bank Guarantee in the amount of One Million Five Hundred Thousand (1,500,000) New Israeli Shekels (NIS), valid for a minimum of ninety (90) days from the Proposal Submission Date, as specified in the RFP, Exhibit E.
- Joint Ventures are allowed to participate in the Tender in accordance with the conditions stated in the RFP, Part B, Section 2 and Exhibit A.
- Offeror, if a foreign entity, shall additionally provide a Commercial Cooperation Undertaking Agreement.

Additional Preliminary Requirements:

Offeror's attention is drawn to the fact that the IAA has allocated a maximum budget for the Work, which is the subject matter of this RFP: in the amount of Twenty-Two Million New Israeli Shekels (NIS 22,000,000) ("Maximum Budget") and consequently Proposals submitted by Offerors exceeding the Maximum Budget shall not be considered by the IAA.

Participation in the Tender Process is subject to the Offeror's satisfying all Preliminary Requirements as detailed in the Mandatory Tender Regulations (1983), Clause 6 (a), (1), (2) and (3).

Proposal Documents: Tender Documents may be purchased until the Proposal Submission Date for the non-refundable amount of Thirteen Thousand New Israeli Shekels (NIS 13,000 NIS), including VAT. Offerors who previously purchased Public Tender No. C4030054 are entitled to obtain these Tender Documents free of charge.

Tender Documents are available from the Project Management Firm (PMF) starting 14 December 1998 between the hours of 09:00 and 12:00, business days (Sunday through Thursday). Interested Offerors must contact the PMF Contracts Administrator, Mr. Zvi Peretz Cohen at telephone number: 972-3-977-4458 (fax number 972-3-977-2958) a minimum of forty eight (48) hours in advance to arrange Site access. Interested parties may preview the Tender Documents prior to their purchase.

All qualifying Proposals shall be delivered in sealed envelopes/packages not later than 10:00 hours local time on or before 29 December 1998 to the appropriate tender box located in the Archive of the Airports Authority, Main Office, 2nd Floor, Room No. 113, Ben Gurion International Airport, Israel.

The IAA is not bound to accept the lowest Proposal or any Proposal whatsoever.

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Charter fiasco

Why is this Palestine National Council vote different from all other PNC votes?

After all, the PNC voted to abrogate its charter in 1996 during a legally convened session with a proper quorum. About 70 percent of the entire membership voted for the resolution, including hundreds of veteran members who had long supported a hardline position.

In contrast, the vote this week was an informal gathering, pumped up by a feel-good speech by President Bill Clinton, with no debate and fewer members present. But the issue of the PLO Charter perfectly symbolizes the current state of the peace process.

What happened?

As required by the Israel-PLO agreements, Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat called a PNC meeting in March 1996 to drop those provisions in its 30-year-old charter calling for Israel's destruction. This session, organized according to the PLO's constitution, voted to abrogate the charter. The decision was hailed by both Clinton and then prime minister Shimon Peres.

But then several high-level PLO officials who opposed changing the charter — including both the PNC's own chairman and several leaders of Fatah, Arafat's own group — went on the offensive.

They inaccurately stated in interviews and official publications that actually the PNC had done nothing and that the charter was still in force. Their motives were both to back their own positions and to appease extremist feelings among Palestinians.

Arafat did not fire or discipline any of these people.

However, the PLO's highest body, its Executive Committee, confirmed the charter's revision. In addition, Arafat himself wrote three official letters to the US government certifying that the charter had been abrogated.

Meanwhile, in Israel, right-wingers opposed to the peace process picked up the headline Palestinian material and accurately translated it into Hebrew and English. The intent of this campaign was to help defeat Peres in the 1996 elections and bring to power a government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu. Some Israelis were horrified, others were more doubtful over Palestinian credibility.

The issue played some role in swaying the Israeli electorate. Consequently, Netanyahu insisted that the charter remained in effect and demanded a new vote. This symbolic issue became so important as to be a top Israeli priority at the Wye negotiations.

Real territorial concessions were traded for a worthless reaffirmation of a step the Palestinians had already taken and repeatedly confirmed.

In this context, Clinton promised to visit Gaza and to attend the Palestinian meeting. Thus, in a very real sense, both Clinton's visit and its theme of giving something to the Palestinians was a result of Israeli demands which backfired.

Finally, in the American president's presence — but in no way constituting a real PNC meeting — the Palestinian guests raised their hands to signify that they favored, well, something or other.

Netanyahu then declared that this event, which really did not meet the legalistic conditions he had previously demanded, was a

great victory proving his policy's correctness and demonstrating the value of Israeli steadfastness.

This whole exercise was unnecessary and objectively meaningless. If both sides now feel more inclined to peace and compromise than they did last week, that's a good thing. Yet, clearly, the situation is worse than it was a month ago. So where's the great progress?

AT ANY rate, the charter fiasco does signify three important elements which have subverted the peace process, especially during the last two-and-a-half years:

- Profound mistrust between the two parties easily triggered by one side doing something it may believe insignificant or legally acceptable but which enrages its partner's leadership, public opinion, and domestic politics;

The Region



Barry Rubin

- Efforts by opponents of the peace process — especially Palestinian terrorism but also land grabs and other actions taken by Israelis — that derail the process. Such deeds are not morally equivalent though they are, in practical effect, politically equivalent;

- Repeated side-tracking of serious negotiations by relatively irrelevant side issues, which then become tests of strength and demagoguery to win domestic political support.

Each side's effort to "fool" the other is often closely linked with attempts to appeal to domestic audiences.

For example, the Palestinian side at Wye promised to reduce extreme anti-Israel provocation in the official PA media. Within a few days, however, these items had returned to the press and radio.

Equally, Netanyahu pointed out correctly that Israel's agreement at Wye to release 750 Palestinian prisoners did not explicitly specify that large numbers of them would not be criminals. Yet the large proportion of car thieves among the freed convicts was clearly not going to persuade Palestinians of Israeli good faith.

The same point applies to the PA's false claim that Israel had violated the Wye agreement by its selection of those to be freed, or Ariel Sharon urging settlers to seize land.

After a promising start, then, the Wye agreement's implementation was frozen and violence escalated. Clinton, who originally planned his trip as the equivalent of a Mediterranean pleasure cruise — letting him bask in the light of his success as peacemaker at Wye — now found himself going over Niagara Falls in a barrel.

The main issue for US policy became how the American president, who had enough troubles at home already, would emerge from the situation looking good. He poured on large measures of his usual insubstantial feel-good rhetoric.

A fitting example of this was an allegedly true, touching anecdote he told during his 1994 speech to the Knesset about how his minister told him to safeguard Israel. This time, the version differed enough to make one even more suspicious that it was a total fabrication.

Despite each side's spin on this week's events, nobody should emerge from this mess with much credit. The best thing that could happen is to regain November's momentum. When we start being grateful for just staying in place, everyone is in trouble.

Few US newspapers favor impeachment

Newspapers that censured Clinton for the Lewinsky affair now oppose impeachment.

By HOWARD KURTZ

After President Clinton admitted misleading the country about Monica Lewinsky, a wave of revulsion swept through the media, with more than 140 newspapers and plenty of columnists urging him to resign.

Less than four months later, many of the same purveyors of elite opinion are staunchly opposing Clinton's impeachment which, if the Senate voted to convict, would lead to his eviction.

Are these esteemed media heavies wimping out at the moment of truth? After all, Clinton was never very likely to follow their collective advice and leave town, making resignation a painless solution to champion.

"This is the hardest issue I've ever had to deal with," said Jane Eisner, editorial page editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. "Some of our readers are still angry at us for calling for him to resign. Some readers are angry at us for not calling for him to be impeached. Not everyone on our board agrees. It's a no-win situation."

William Kristol, editor of the *Weekly Standard*, which demands impeachment every week, sees a darker picture: "There's a whole bunch of liberals very critical of Clinton, but around mid-September they looked into the abyss and saw that if Clinton were forced out of office, it would be a victory for the right, for the puritans, for the Christians, for the moralists, and they could not abide that. It becomes a question of which side you're on in the culture wars."

The *Inquirer*, *Des Moines Register*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Seattle Times*, *Denver Post*, *San Antonio Express-News* and *Orlando Sentinel* are among the major newspapers that urged the president to call it quits in August — but now oppose impeachment.

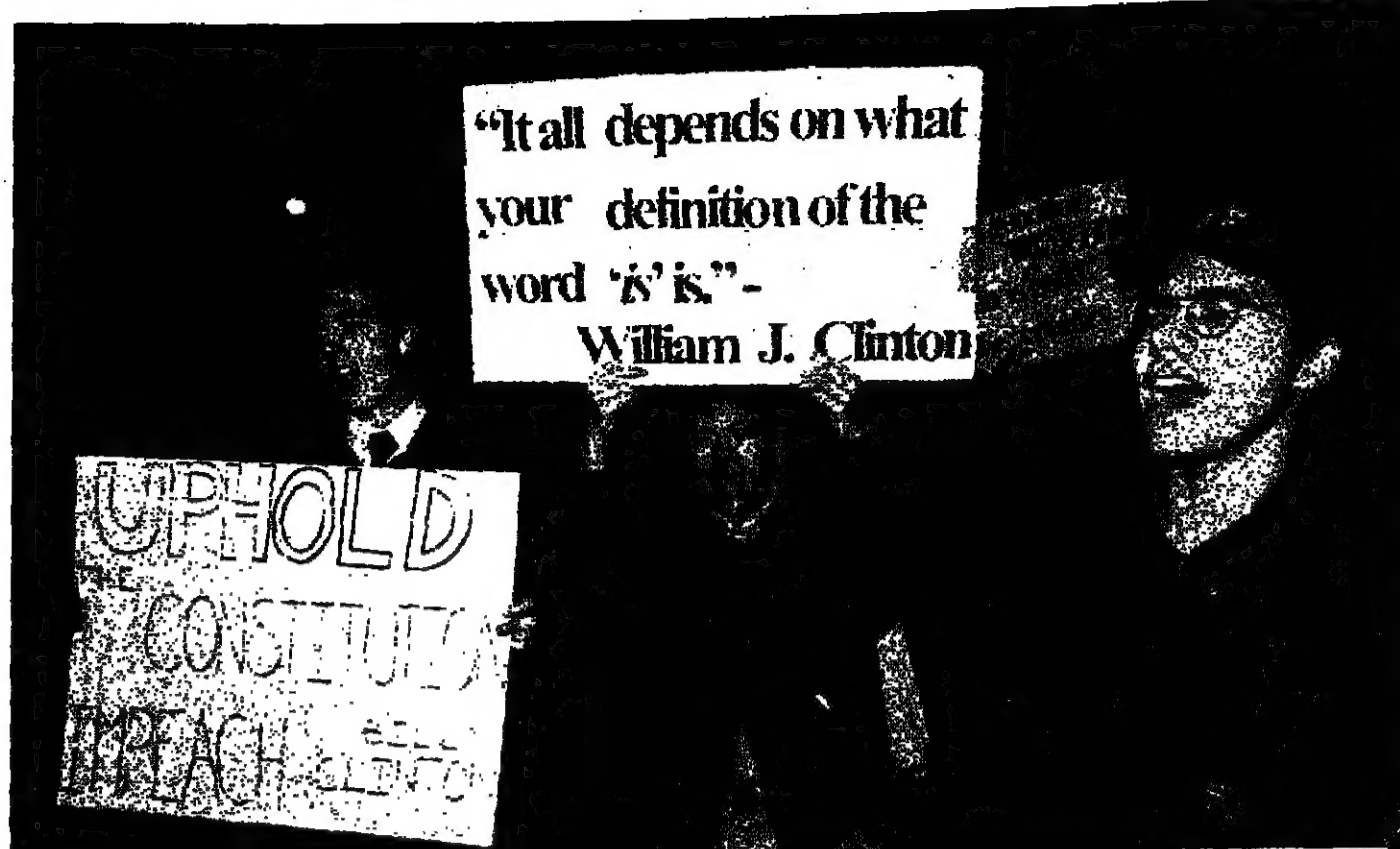
The pro-resignation *Chicago Tribune* has sidestepped the impeachment question. *USA Today* and the *Washington Times* renewed their calls Monday for resignation but did not take a direct position on impeachment.

BOTH the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have harshly assailed the president throughout the Lewinsky imbroglio, while stopping short of urging him to resign. The two papers have endorsed a tough congressional censure and strongly criticized the Republican drive toward an impeachment vote this week.

"The Republicans are defining impeachment down," said the *Times*. The House Judiciary Committee "has failed miserably," said the *Post*.

Those who favor resignation but not impeachment have an explanation — several, actually — for their apparent inconsistency.

"When I called for him to resign, I was offended by the immorality of the president having sex with a subordinate," said Lars-Erik Nelson, a columnist for the *New York Daily News*.



Princeton University students call for the impeachment of US President Clinton at an anti-impeachment rally held on the university campus on Tuesday.

"I still think that's worthy of resignation because of the shame. But I don't see that we have to destroy our own Constitution if he doesn't do that. I don't see this rising to the level of treason, bribery or high crimes and misdemeanors... I hope that doesn't seem like too fine a point."

Chicago Tribune columnist Clarence Page said he wanted Clinton to quit because he thought his effectiveness was over after the August 17 apology.

"I've never been so delighted to be wrong," Page said. "Obviously I underestimated the ineptitude of Clinton's enemies."

The Republicans, he said, were "making this a crusade to get Clinton. I felt then, and feel now, that resignation is infinitely preferable to his being impeached. Impeachment is such a trauma for the nation. It tears the nation apart, polarizes people. It's a wrenching experience."

While Andrew Johnson's 1868 impeachment was fought over vital questions involving Reconstruction and the South, Page said, "these are such ludicrous issues by comparison."

EVEN those at the pinnacle of punditry are hardly unaware that two-thirds of the country has consistently opposed impeachment. "They have been spooked a little bit by the

polls and all the criticism of the media elite as being out of touch," Kristol said.

Several opinion editors acknowledged that public sentiments had influenced their stance.

"However much we may feel from a high-plane editorial point of view, this is not a view that's shared by the country," said Mindy Cameron, editorial page editor of the *Seattle Times*.

"It was pretty clear to us he lied, but to a lot of people in the country it didn't matter so much... We wrestled with that — this is not unanimous among our editorial board — and came down for a very harsh censure."

Eisner said it would be "really foolhardy" to "disregard the public."

One reason the *Inquirer* urged Clinton to step down, she said, "was to spare us this very agony we're going through right now." Still, "our board feels these wrongs justify a warrant impeachment. The bar would be so low that we're really afraid of the precedent that would be set. The consequences of impeachment, we think, could be very dangerous to the country."

Said Bob Richter, editorial page editor of the *San Antonio Express-News*: "We don't feel badly we called on him to resign. But we don't think the country and Congress and you guys in Washington need to go through

this ordeal. Nothing else will get done, and we've got Social Security and Medicare going broke."

Richter said the paper's publisher favored impeachment but was persuaded to go along with editorials advocating censure.

SOME newspapers — including the *Charlotte Observer*, *Wichita Eagle* and *Richmond Times-Dispatch* ("perhaps the most perfidious president in history") — have embraced the drive for impeachment.

And even those who have blinked at the idea of a Senate trial have continued to criticize Clinton for refusing to admit that he lied under oath.

In Monday's *Daily News*, Nelson described Clinton as "a reckless sexual predator" and "disgraceful reprobate" whose conduct has been "unconscionable," "reprehensible" and "unforgivable." Even as he attacked House Republicans for turning him into a sympathetic figure.

Of course, not everyone in the press is consumed by the prospect of impeachment.

The cover of Nelson's paper Monday was devoted to the opening of Nicole Kidman's new play: "Naked Nicole Takes B Way."

A box the size of a Post-it Note carried the headline "I Won't Quit, Says Bill." (The Washington Post)

Independent Swiss flirt with Europe

Switzerland eyes a possible link with the rest of the continent. Charles Trueheart reports.

For generations, the Swiss have been raised on a diet of difference.

They were taught that Switzerland is an island of neutrality in a continent of strife, a fortress of orderly prosperity in a Europe beset by high taxes, high unemployment and high interest rates.

Being out of step with their neighbors was a national virtue, and Switzerland's postwar status as one of the richest, most stable countries in the world was proof of it.

True to that comforting heritage, and thanks to national plebiscites that decide all important policy changes, Switzerland has declined repeatedly over the years to take part in the march of European unity, just as it has said no to membership in NATO and the United Nations.

So come January, when the countries surrounding Switzerland will

shed their national currencies and adopt new money called the euro, the 7 million Swiss will keep their precious franc rather than risk its dilution, and with it their independence.

Georg Moser, who operates a leather-goods stall in an outdoor market here in the capital, rectified a litany of reasons why Switzerland is better off on its own than as part of a pan-European morass.

"We've got our troubles, but it's not so bad here," Moser said, stamping his feet against the chill evening.

"Look at the Portuguese and the Spanish — they don't have the same values as we do. I don't trust the Germans. The French can be troublesome, you know. And how can we control what's going on in Brussels?"

But he also surmised that the Swiss exception is in its twilight: "I

don't know if we can go on like this much longer. ... Being Swiss doesn't mean what it used to mean. My kids don't know what it means. They shock me sometimes. They think of themselves as Europeans."

Moser's pride of place, and his misgivings, are widely shared in Switzerland. The Swiss may be taking a wait-and-see attitude toward the euro, but there's a dawning sense of inevitability that their future may have to lie in a web of closer attachments to their continental neighbors.

THE price of their solitude, which served them so well during World War II and then the Cold War, lately has been steep. It was driven home like a dagger with the revelations of Swiss banks' profiting from the accounts of Jews who lost their lives in Nazi gas chambers.

By joining the pile-on over Nazi gold, many Swiss say, their European neighbors abandoned them, as did the much-admired US.

In Vienna on Friday, the Swiss completed four-year-old negotiations on a bilateral trade deal with the European Union that might have been unnecessary, had Swiss voters not rejected an offer of membership in the European Economic Area — a single-market zone linking the EU with the rest of Western Europe — in 1992.

"They're no longer equal partners with their neighbors," declared Pierre Hazan, author of the unspurring new book *Le Mal Suisse* (roughly translated, "The Troubled Swiss"), in an interview.

"What can the Swiss offer [at the negotiating table]? Not much, anymore. ... The future of Switzerland is being decided outside this country."

The coming of the euro next month as the official currency of 11 countries is being observed in Switzerland with apparent confidence, at least in the short term.

If the euro is strong and stable, Swiss businesses expect to benefit from the resulting economic health of Europe. Sixty percent of Swiss exports go to Europe, and 80% of its imports come from Europe.

And because Swiss banks have always been a haven for foreign assets, dealing with 10 fewer currencies may not be a difficult transition.

A more ominous scenario would be a euro that founders, possibly because the shakier economies and more indebted governments of Europe can't sustain it.

If that happens, analysts and officials here say, Swiss exports would become prohibitively expensive to the country's major customers. Swiss industry and the Swiss work force would suffer. A devaluation of the Swiss franc might ensue.

ON the horizon in the next decade are a succession of popular new referendums that could force the issue of Swiss integration into Europe.

Swiss leaders have favored it for years. Despite setbacks in popular referendums, the government con-

tinues to tout the idea in glossy pamphlets so enthusiastic they might have been produced by the European Union.

But the battle for the hearts and minds of the Swiss is not yet won.

The peculiarity of this direct democracy, said Pascal Couchepin, Switzerland's minister of economic affairs and one of the seven Federal Council members who govern the Swiss confederation, is that "all political forces are in the government. The real opposition in Switzerland is the people."

The best-known critic of just about every entangling alliance is Christoph Blocher, a nationalist businessman. A wealthy entrepreneur who runs a chemical empire with factories from Taiwan to South Carolina, Blocher is also a populist firebrand, a rare creature in the Swiss context and a frightening one to many consensus-oriented Swiss politicians.

"If we join Europe, our interest rates will rise 2%, and that would raise housing costs by 30%," he said in an interview.

EU membership would instantly make Switzerland one of its wealthiest members, imposing a significant burden of as much as 4 billion Swiss francs a year in payments to the European Union for redistribution to have-not members.

That, Blocher said, would raise Swiss taxes — low by European standards — by 15%. He predicted the unemployment rate, at 3.6%, the second-lowest in Europe, would rise, as would Switzerland's rock-bottom interest rates. The Swiss central bank would cease to exist, he said, and Swiss sovereignty with it.

"It's important that a small country like Switzerland can determine its own fate rather than let a huge bureaucracy do it," Blocher said.

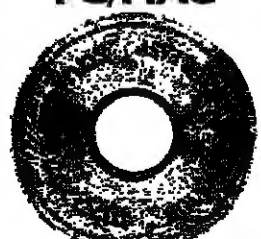
Yet he said that he might change his mind eventually, if the euro works and the European system becomes much more decentralized.

If Switzerland's most ardent European rejectionist is willing to leave the door ajar, then the Swiss may be closer to walking through it than they realize.

(The Washington Post)

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Gore: Don't impeach Clinton

By LARRY MARGASAK

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Al Gore appealed to Congress yesterday to "turn away from the bitter partisanship" and spare President Clinton from impeachment.

The president continued to lose support as lawmakers returned to town to review the House Judiciary Committee's final evidence.

With Clinton weighing possible military action in Iraq, Republican House leaders considered delaying or recessing impeachment proceedings if air strikes were to occur.

"I think it would be awkward to have an impeachment vote during a bombing in Iraq," committee chairman Henry Hyde said as he emerged from a GOP leaders' meeting where the issue was discussed.

Hyde said no final decision had been made but that there appeared to be consensus that impeachment proceedings should be suspended during a military operation. If an attack begins, "I think the speaker then would call for a recess and confer with the minority leader," he said.

Rep. Bob Livingston, the incom-

ing House speaker, declined to discuss how air strikes would affect impeachment proceedings, saying, "I don't want to speculate on that."

The fresh Iraqi crisis came as lawmakers prepared to begin debating articles of impeachment on the House floor today, and as Clinton's prospects for avoiding impeachment dimmed.

Republican Reps. Bob Ney of Ohio and Brian Bilbray of California, two moderates whom the White House had hoped would break party ranks, announced this morning they would vote to approve articles of impeachment against Clinton.

"He has shattered the trust of the American people by committing perjury, obstructing justice and corrupting the rule of law," Ney said.

Bilbray said he made his decision after talking to the White House on Tuesday night. He said he had concluded Clinton committed perjury "willfully and calculatedly" and "I cannot walk away and do nothing about what I know in my heart and in my mind has happened."

The GOP-led Judiciary Committee said in its final report that Clinton had disgraced his office and should be ousted and

barred from holding federal office again.

Dissenting Democrats on the committee said Clinton's transgressions were not impeachable.

The president planned to meet at the White House today with two Republicans he hopes will vote against impeachment. Reps. Christopher Shays of Connecticut and Arto Houghton of New York.

The vice president canceled a trip to New Hampshire to stay in Washington and he tried to rally fresh support to stop Clinton from becoming only the second chief executive to be impeached.

"I believe on Capitol Hill there is still time for Democrats and Republicans to come together and embrace a bipartisan compromise to seek a resolution that is both quick and fair and try to turn away from the bitter partisanship that we have seen so far," Gore said at the White House.

The prospects for Clinton avoiding impeachment in a House vote continued to worsen as more undecided Republicans declared their intention to vote to remove Clinton.

Others to come out for impeachment today were Reps. Kenny Hulshof and outgoing Bill

Redmond.

"I know the polls nationally say one thing, and yet I believe that this is a matter of conscience, a matter of historical significance," Hulshof said.

Clinton advisers hoped to work with Shays, who told a town meeting in Norwalk, Connecticut, on Tuesday night: "Impeachable offenses... have not been proven and I believe the proven offenses are not impeachable. But it is darn close."

Houghton already has announced he intends to vote against impeachment.

Democratic sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said House Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt of Missouri had been in touch with Shays to discuss whether it was possible for a group of Republican moderates to accompany him to the White House.

In a report to the House justifying the four articles of impeachment approved last week along party lines, Judiciary Committee Republicans said Clinton "disgraced himself and the high office he holds."

"His high crimes and misdemeanors undermine our Constitution. They warrant his

impeachment, his removal from office and his disqualification from holding further office," the Republican report said.

A draft version of the minority report, by the committee's Democrats, concluded: "We do not believe that the nature of the misconduct is the mettle with which the founding fathers intended impeachments to be made."

Repeating a theme sounded by Democrats in impeachment hearings, the minority report said that even if the allegations were true, they don't merit "impeaching a president, thereby decapitating the executive branch and disenfranchising the electorate."

One GOP lawmaker proposed that Clinton make a \$2 million payment and accept a roughly worded censure resolution. "Even at this late date, there are compelling reasons to pursue a different course with a better solution for our nation," wrote Rep. Mike Castle of Delaware.

A senior White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Clinton's aides were discussing Castle's proposal and were eager to see any other "reasonable" ideas that might bring more moderates to Clinton's side.

WORLD

in brief

Five added to bin Laden indictment

NEW YORK (AP) — Five fugitives were added yesterday to an indictment charging Osama bin Laden and others with waging a campaign of terror that resulted in the August bombings of two US embassies in Africa.

The new suspects were charged with conspiracy in a superseding indictment returned in US District Court in Manhattan. They were identified as Mustafa Fadhil, Khalaf Mohammed, Ahmed Ghailani, Fahid Msalam, and Sheikh Ahmed Swedan.

The indictment charges each of the men specifically in the August 7 bombing at the US Embassy in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania that killed 11 people, all of them Africans.

Madrid blueprint seeks lasting Bosnia peace

MADRID (Reuters) — More than 40 countries sponsoring the costly reconstruction of Bosnia agreed yesterday on a sweeping plan calling on the leaders of the war-torn Balkan nation to step up urgent peace efforts.

The Peace Implementation Council, meeting for the third time since the end of the 1992-95 Bosnian war, issued a detailed blueprint designed to bridge the country's ethnic divide among its Muslim, Serb, and Croat communities. Delegates urged Bosnian authorities to stick to commitments under the US-brokered Dayton peace accord requiring them to allow the return of hundreds of thousands of refugees and help in the arrest of indicted war criminals.

Mandela revisits tornado scene

UMTATA, South Africa (Reuters) — President Nelson Mandela yesterday returned to the damaged South African town of Umtata, where a day earlier he escaped injury in a freak tornado that killed 18 people.

Rescue workers discovered a body under rubble yesterday and police spokesman Mzukisi Fityela said two people had died in Umtata General Hospital during the night from injuries suffered when the storm hit Tuesday afternoon.

He said 163 injured people were being treated in the hospital. Local reporter Stan Mzimba said the small farming town looked like a battle zone after the tornado swept through around 3 p.m. Tuesday.

Death toll in Rome building collapse rises

ROME (AP) — At least 13 people died and about 20 were missing after a five-story Rome apartment building collapsed early yesterday as its occupants slept.

"There are 13 dead, 10 of them adults," Luigi Abete, head of the fire brigades squad at the scene, told reporters. Two people were found alive in the rubble.

The collapse, which occurred at around 3 a.m., was first thought to have been caused by a gas explosion, but fire chiefs said later that subsidence or structural faults were more likely to blame.

A young firefighter collapsed in shock when his parents and one of his brothers were found among the victims.

Pope: Rights can bring peace in millennium

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope John Paul II urged nations yesterday to fully respect human rights, to ensure a "culture of peace."

"The new millennium is close at hand, and its approach has filled the hearts of many with hope for a more just and fraternal world," the pope said in a message Tuesday issued for the church's World Day of Peace, which it marks January 1.

The pontiff also pointed to misery caused by the economic crisis throughout Asia and other parts of the world, which has reduced "countless people... to conditions of extreme poverty." He called on financial powers "to find a solution to the frightening problem of the international debt of the poorest nations."

Dolly's makers doubt Koreans cloned human

LONDON (AP) — Scientists who created Dolly the sheep said yesterday they did not believe South Korean researchers had cloned a human embryo.

The Korean researchers said they aborted the experiment after the human embryo divided into four cells. Humans start off as a single cell which then divides repeatedly, but it is only after three cell divisions that the nucleus takes over control of the development of the embryo.

"The Korean group stopped the experiment when they saw four cells being produced so there is no evidence," said Dr. Harry Griffin of the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh.

China executes seven gang members

BEIJING (AP) — Authorities in southern Guangdong province have executed seven gang members who were convicted of dozens of armed robberies and trafficking in guns and ammunition.

The members of what was known as the "Two Gun, One Axe Gang" were executed Tuesday, the local newspaper *Yangcheng Evening News* said.

The paper said the group's members were found guilty of killing three people and committing about 50 armed robberies.

Saddam recalls Gulf War as tension rises

BAGHDAD (Reuters) — President Saddam Hussein urged his people to confront Western "aggression" as they did in the 1991 Gulf War as Iraq and the United States edged closer to military confrontation yesterday.

Saddam invoked the memory of what Iraq calls the "Mother of all Battles" as UN weapons inspectors pulled out of the country, accusing Baghdad of refusing to cooperate.

The United States and Britain, which came within minutes of attacking Iraq when it last defied arms inspections just over a month ago, both stressed they could strike without warning this time.

President Bill Clinton, bracing for an impeachment vote later this week by the House of Representatives, met foreign policy advisers to discuss the crisis. Britain said Iraq is making a grave error.

Saddam met with top aides to discuss "necessary precautions and measures to confront American and British aggression," a statement by the Iraqi leadership said.

"We call on you, Iraqis, women and men, after relying on God, to throw out their dreams and their failed visions and prove by solid facts that they will fail as they have failed during the Mother of Battles," the statement said.

Ninety-two inspectors and support staff of the UN Special Commission on arms inspections (UNSCOM) were evacuated to Bahrain following a UN report accusing Iraq of breaking its promise to cooperate fully with their work.

UNSCOM is in charge of efforts to eliminate Iraq's biological, chemical, and ballistic arms. The International Atomic Energy Agency, which deals with nuclear weapons, said it is also pulling its inspectors out of Iraq.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said the UN report was aimed at giving the United States justification for military strikes.

"The report is ill-intentioned and in particular aimed to justify American and British military aggression against Iraq," Aziz was quoted as saying by the official Iraqi News Agency.

Russia called for an emergency meeting of the United Nations



UN weapons inspectors prepare their vehicle for evacuation from Baghdad yesterday after claiming that Iraq reneged on its promise of full cooperation.

Security Council, while a French government spokesman said Paris still hopes a military strike could be avoided, but realizes this might not now be possible.

UN sources said border monitors from Lloyds of London, who check the import into Iraq of humanitarian supplies, had been asked to evacuate the country. But oil industry sources said monitors from a Dutch company who check Iraqi oil exports remained at their posts.

Iraq, laboring under international sanctions, sells about 1.8 million barrels per day under an "oil-for-food" deal with the United Nations that enables it to buy food and medicines.

Industry sources said the sales continued as normal yesterday, but oil prices rose sharply as tensions increased.

A US official said Clinton, just back from a grueling Middle East trip and trying to rally support to

avoid impeachment, had discussed Iraq at a meeting with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Secretary of Defense William Cohen, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Earlier, another US official said Washington would have to study the UN report to decide "appropriate next steps," adding: "I don't want to foreshadow the use of force one way or the other." The United States has 201 aircraft and 22 warships in the Gulf region.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said the UN report shows Iraq had carried out a "plan of deceit" to prevent arms inspectors from conducting their work.

A spokesman for Blair said possible air strikes could not be organized at "the click of a finger." The Muslim holy month of Ramadan, due to start later this week, is a serious consideration in deciding the timing of any attack.

he added.

But Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said Saddam should expect

no warning if Britain and the United States decide to launch air strikes.

US forces in the Gulf

The United States has maintained a solid force of 24,100 military men and women in the Gulf region.

There are 22 navy ships, eight of them are carrying Tomahawk cruise missiles, which could strike targets in Iraq at long range.

There are 201 military aircraft in the area, including 15 B-52 heavy bombers on the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia. The bombers also can deliver air-launched cruise missiles, from points far from Iraq.

The navy is due to have two aircraft carriers in the region by Sunday, with the USS Enterprise in the Gulf now, and the USS Carl Vinson arriving shortly. The Enterprise is due to return to the Mediterranean Sea after the Vinson's arrival.

Iraq dodged renewed US and British air strikes in mid-November by pledging to resume full cooperation with inspectors and allow unfettered access to sites and documents.

Italians exhume banker's body

COMO (AP) — The body of Roberto Calvi, a Vatican-connected financier, was to be exhumed yesterday to determine whether his 1982 death was murder or suicide.

Prosecutors in the case of Flavio Carboni, a Roman businessman

charged with conspiracy to commit homicide in connection with the case, hope a new examination of the body will shed light on Calvi's death. His corpse was found hanging from Blackfriars Bridge in London following

Italy's biggest postwar banking scandal. Calvi was known as "God's banker" for his close ties to the Vatican. Banco Ambrosiano, in which the Vatican bank held a significant stake, collapsed in 1982.

Ex-Beatle: Collector tried to sell stolen lyrics

GOSHEN, NY (AP) — Ex-Beatle Paul McCartney says the original handwritten lyrics to "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" that a collector offered to sell him in August were stolen from his

London home 30 years ago. McCartney wants the lyrics returned and filed a show-cause order in state Supreme Court here last month demanding that one collector reveal the name of another

who now has the lyric sheet in his possession. A photocopy of what appeared to be the lyric sheet was sent to him by collector Gary J. Zimet with a \$550,000 sale offer for the original

on behalf of an unidentified friend, McCartney said. Zimet said on Tuesday that he had revealed the collector's name to McCartney, but would not reveal it publicly.

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Bringing down Saddam

Describing the latest Iraqi crisis by quoting the French philosopher saying "the more things change the more they stay the same" would be too dignified. Perhaps the wit of Yogi Berra - "it's déjà vu all over again" - is more apt, because if it weren't for the fact that such serious elements as germ warfare and Scud missiles are potentially involved, the recurring crises would by now be taking on the aspects of a farce.

The problem is that running a shell game that looks like a farce is precisely what Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein wants, because it serves his megalomaniac interests while he mocks the United States and its allies - as they play right into his hands. The cycle of blocked UN weapons inspectors, evacuated diplomats, troop convergence on the Gulf, only to be followed by yet another attempt at restoring the UN inspection regime, has only helped Saddam. Unless and until the West adopts a serious strategy designed to rid the world of Saddam once and for all, it can expect the non-sensical game of lies, demands, crises, and bluster to continue. With every passing round, Saddam further bolsters his store of illegal weapons, while unscrupulous economic interests, salivating over the money to be made in rebuilding the Iraqi oil industry, press for an easing of the sanctions imposed on Iraq - which are in any case slowly collapsing. The net result has accurately been described as "force appeasement."

The abrupt evacuation from Iraq yesterday of UN and humanitarian agency personnel and their families, accompanied by indications that American and British bombers are preparing to inflict heavy damage on Baghdad, might be the signal that the charade of ridding Iraq of biological and chemical weapons through civilian UN inspectors is finally over, and that the US is serious this time about taking forceful action. Whether or not this is the case remains to be seen, however, as only a month ago the same threats to use deadly force were made, inducing Saddam to "resolve" the crisis by pledging cooperation with the UN - a pledge he promptly violated as soon as UN inspectors closed in on a weapons plant. It would take a great show of will on the part of US President Bill Clinton to take decisive and forceful action against Iraq, even as the impeachment threat against him turns towards a climax in the House of Representatives today. It can only be hoped that, should he find the will to do so, he will find enough political support in Washington to pursue the course against Saddam, regardless of the scandal that has seemingly engulfed all political discourse in the US capital.

The UN inspection agency in Iraq, UNSCOM, believes that tens of thousands of chemical warfare munitions are still unaccounted for, as are a number of operational Scud missiles. Despite a very brave effort on the part of the UN, and some surprisingly effective successes in uncovering highly secret weapons production plants, its task in Iraq over the past seven years was almost doomed to fail from the start, because there is only so much that outside inspectors, ultimately dependent on the good will of their hosts, can accomplish in as tightly controlled an authoritarian regime as Iraq is under Saddam.

An allied bombing mission can go a long way towards destroying the Iraqi military infrastructure and store of weapons of mass destruction. There are, however, limits on the extent to which allied bombs and missiles can strike at every possible location in which illegal weapons are stored. There will doubtless be caches of weapons that will survive even a massive bombing effort. Nor will bombs persuade Saddam to stop the insane warmongering and irrational megalomania that characterize him.

The West, and indeed the entire world community, needs to openly admit that the rotten, deadly regime in Baghdad, and the man standing at its head, must be gotten rid of, once and for all. Those who may shrink from the thought that foreign powers will thus "meddle" in the affairs of a sovereign state would do well to ponder the precedents recently set by the arrests and trials for crimes against humanity set in motion against Chilean and Serbian generals. The hands of Saddam and his criminal accomplices are far bloodier, and the present Iraqi regime - with its unquestionable zeal for producing biological and nuclear weapons - is a clear and present danger to humanity, to peace, and to stability everywhere. And those suffering most are the Iraqi people themselves.

The Iraqi democratic opposition has been languishing for years, waiting for the democracies to grant it the moral, material, and air support it needs to stage a real insurrection in Iraq. At best, it has received half-hearted and terribly sporadic encouragement from leaders who never could find the courage to select a clear and bold strategy for dealing with Iraq. Even that evaporates at the most critical junctures when Saddam's forces brutally suppress any hint of revolt.

In a fortnight we will enter the last year of the twentieth century. If there is any one lesson that needs to be learned from the past 100 years, it is that aggressive dictatorships need to be dealt with firmly before they pose even greater dangers. The time for implementing that lesson is now.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UTTER CONTEMPT

Sir, - Jonathan Rosenblum has plumbed new depths of self-righteous hypocrisy in his article "Confessions of a haredi dad" (December 11).

To compare his (justifiable) embarrassment with the feelings of the parents of non-combat soldiers is appalling chutzpa and displays the extent of his ignorance of the military. Without such tasks as military intelligence, logistics, radar operators, supplies, mechanics, maintenance and cooks etc. the army could not function in a

combat role.

Unfortunately for Rosenblum I am not a Meretz-voting resident of Sheinkin Street. I am an Orthodox Jew who has served in the regular army and continues to serve in the reserves.

During the entire period of my service I have not met with antagonism to my religious beliefs and practices. Yes I have encountered situations where *kashrut* was less than satisfactory - when possible I fixed it, and when I couldn't I found other ways not to compro-

mise my standards. In many instances non-observant fellow soldiers helped me.

Rosenblum talks of hatred of haredim. He should closely examine whether the attitudes which he expresses contribute to this odious phenomenon. I certainly do not hate haredim but I do hold Rosenblum in utter contempt.

JONATHAN KALMAN

Jerusalem.

KNOW THY ENEMY

greeted warmly by the owners and hosts. A wonderful meal was set before us.

However, to the shock of these tourists, the owner told them how the Jews have always taken their land, even as far as Abraham. He went on to openly criticize Israel quite severely. The conversation was quickly turned around by one of the pilgrim leaders.

When we got back on the bus, the leader asked me for the microphone and he said to the group, "Now you have heard with your own ears and have seen with your own eyes, the problem that Israel faces daily, come let us pray."

NAME WITHHELD UPON REQUEST

A DIFFERENT ANSWER

Sir, - The Labor Party complains that Israel Radio has interviewed Binyamin Netanyahu too often and Ehud Barak not enough. It's easy to understand

why. Barak always says the same thing, no matter what the question is. Netanyahu answers differently

every time, even if it's the same question.

ISRAEL PICKHOLTZ

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On December 17, 1933, *The Palestine Post* reported a lengthy statement prepared for the House of Commons proving that since the 1922 census the increase in the number of Arabs who entered Palestine was approximately equal to the number of Jewish immigrants and that the country still enjoyed unprecedented prosperity and shortage of workers.

50 years ago: On December 17, 1948, *The Palestine Post* reported that five Egyptian tanks which had attacked Nirim and were knocked out by the settlements' defenders were British "Locusts" received during the truce, in violation of the UN embargo. The British Mosquito plane which spied on Israeli positions was shot down by an Israeli fighter.

25 years ago: On December 17, 1973, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, met Prime Minister Golda Meir in Jerusalem, to discuss the problems of disengagement, while more Israeli soldiers were wounded in continuous flare-ups along the Syrian and Egyptian front lines.

Alexander Zvielli

The View From the East

DAOUD KUTTAB

We have a dream

Twenty-five years ago, prime minister Golda Meir questioned the very existence of Palestinians as a separate national entity. This week, as Palestinians once again confirmed their amendment of the PLO Covenant, the US president reaffirmed in word and in deed the existence of a distinctive national Palestinian identity.

Having amended all the clauses that contradict the peace accords back in 1996, the leaders and representatives of the Palestinian people raised their hands and stood up to tell the world that they are closing an old page in their history as they open a new page.

But as the leader of the Western world was encouraging the forward-looking attitudes of the Palestinians, the Israelis were looking back and digging in their heels. Palestinians looked to their new found American friend for help in getting their political prisoners released, their land liberated and their future secured. On the other side, the Israelis were crying over their dead, talking about Palestinians with blood on their hands and denying their supposed peace partners the right to dream.

The Israeli prime minister spoke in arrogance and defiance, completely ignoring the Palestinians' outstretched hands for peace.

The Netanyahu argument seems to be that somehow, if the Palestinian leader accepts that the Israeli government will release common criminals instead of freedom fighters, this will end the popular protests against the Israelis.

All the above conditions are presented in the media as genuine commitments that the Palestinian National Authority made at Wye. But none of them appear in the Wye Memorandum.

What does appear in that agree-

ment is that Israel is to carry out another redeployment from Palestinian territories tomorrow. The "safe passage" road between Gaza and the West Bank should have been opened by now, and the economic troubles facing the Palestinians were to have been resolved by the Israelis.

WHAT is troubling is not only the failure to implement these specific obligations under the Wye Agreement, but the general mood that has been projected. Palestinians - and, to a large degree, the Americans - are now convinced that the present Israeli government is not interested in a genuine peace.

Every possible excuse is found to defer carrying out what is required to move the peace process forward. There are violations not only of the letter of the agreement but, more importantly, of the spirit of peace.

President Bill Clinton talked about this when he spoke about the need for reconciliation and generous genuine peace. He specifically spoke against a "grudging peace."

Although he spoke these words to a Palestinian audience, there is no doubt he was also talking to the Israelis and specifically to the Netanyahu government.

The most obvious difference in the attitudes of Palestinians and Israelis were seen in the itinerary of the first couple on Tuesday. Both Palestinians and Israelis were asked to recommend where they would like the US president, his wife Hillary and daughter Chelsea to go on their last day in the region.

The Palestinians recommended Bethlehem - a visit to the birthplace of Jesus. They provided a choir and a chance to help decorate the Christmas tree. The leaders and people of Bethlehem were out in

Dry Bones



throng fighting for a chance to get a glimpse of the US president.

US and Palestinian flags decked the buildings and a special poster was created for the occasion. As children sang Christmas carols, hundreds of posters spoke of the Palestinian dream of "freedom and independence."

The Israeli choice was the complete opposite. They chose the desert castle of Masada. The symbolism of the location is puzzling. After all, this was the site of mass suicide by zealous Jewish radicals.

Two contradictory symbols. One looking to the future and singing for peace on earth and goodwill

toward men, while the other reflecting a siege mentality.

The balance of forces in the Middle East is not in favor of the Palestinians. They are the weak party in a negotiating process in which the Israelis are trying to dictate every step.

The political leadership of the Palestinian people will try to obtain the best possible deal, considering their adverse negotiating position. But the fact that Arafat and his aides are forced to accept an inferior agreement, doesn't mean that the Palestinian people, including their leadership, are not allowed to dream.

Fable of good government

DANIEL DORON

There may be a silver lining to the noxious cloud of political chicanery enveloping the most recent struggle for government control. Finally, Israelis may realize how dangerous is their illusion that government is capable of tackling the excruciating problems bedeviling them.

They might also discover that the more government overreaches, the less it can accomplish, that it often aggravates problems it is supposed to solve. When government's fingers are in every pie, its hands become so sticky that it cannot fulfill even its legitimate functions.

Without government we sink into anarchy. But to be effective, government must be limited, small, and concentrate on delivering public goods that markets cannot provide: law and order, security, some infrastructure etc.

Too large and distributive a government inevitably becomes enmeshed with conflicting vested interests and in their internal contradictions. These very days we witness how it invites, as in the past, the anarchy it is supposed to contain.

Take the recent efforts to have David Levy and Geshar join the coalition (ironically, a faction based on acrimony and dissension calls itself a "bridge"). Once Binyamin Netanyahu offered them a sizable share in political spoils, other coalition members felt threatened and demanded an increase in theirs.

The effort to widen and stabilize the coalition thus further destabilized it.

marks of power that shape pecking orders. Power is also constantly shifting, so those dependent on it are always insecure. They try to get as much as possible, fearing that if they are not "in" enough, they will eventually be "out."

IN Israel the problem is far more acute because the public sector dispenses 56% of the GNP compared to 45% in Europe and 35% in the US. Israel also still suffers from many structural deformities and political distortions similar to those found in former Soviet bloc countries. They derive from times when government share of the GNP was 75%.

Those who blame direct elections or Netanyahu's personality for the ills afflicting us ignore the fact that our system was always corruptive, that it made a most talented people create a lame economy and a dysfunctional society.

It resulted in a low standard of living, the Yom Kippur War, the bank share debacles, and the slow motion catastrophes in our public services, from education and health to security and welfare, failures that even the present government will find hard to match.

They also forget, apparently, that long before our electoral reform we had "sinky deals" and deadly factional battles, between Ben-Gurion, Sharett, Lavon and Eshkol,

where every dirty trick and underhanded tactic was employed.

Realizing how corrupting distributive politics can become, James Madison argued in the *Federalist Papers* that the chief benefit of "a well-constructed union" was "to break and control the violence of faction." It was responsible, he thought, for "instability, injustice and confusion...the mortal diseases under which popular governments everywhere perished."

Madison warned that populist "governments are too unstable, that the public good is disregarded in the conflict of rival parties, and that measures are too often decided not according to the rules of justice...but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority." There is nothing new under the political sun, only human forgetfulness.

Public choice economists argue convincingly that only constitutional restraints on government spending can contain the ferocious struggle over political spoils. Indeed, distributive politics afflict all democracies, even rich ones such as Sweden or America, and even when they, unlike Israel, are firmly based on the rule of law.

Israel will not escape the degeneration of its political system by tinkering with the electoral system but by establishing strong laws, creating the checks and balances that will limit government from running rampant.

Invoking God and country

URI DAN, DENNIS EISENBERG

Jerusalem, a city which never was and never will be the capital of any other nation." Even those few guests who might have disagreed with these sentiments couldn't help but join the thunder of applause in the elegant banquet hall.

seiges, spiritual and physical.

"Now we are back in our land. We seek peace with our neighbors - all of them. I believe we deserve the kind of peace, the total absence of violence and bloodshed and hatred envisioned by our prophets

The \$64,000 question: Will Netanyahu refuse to redeploy unless Arafat keeps every last one of his commitments?

One after another the names of ancient Hebrew heroes rang out in a passionate flow of oratory:

"Samson strutted large in Gaza on history's stage. His sacrifice there symbolized a total uncompromising struggle against slavery."

"Our heroes of Masada preceded an American patriot, Patrick Henry by 1,700 years when they proclaimed 'give me liberty or give me death.'"

"Today our young conscripts pledge their allegiance to the state there and make Masada a symbol of our determination to choose a life of freedom, peace and security for the Jewish people."

"These goals - freedom, peace and security - can only be guaranteed by Jewish courage, strength of purpose...There is no parallel in history for the kind of attachment the Jewish people have felt for this land for more than 3,000 years, through wars and exiles and

who walked on the very ground on which this hotel is situated.

"We have made excruciating sacrifices for peace," the premier concluded. "We are prepared to fulfill all of our obligations, providing the Palestinians keep their obligations."

IF THESE stirring Zionist sentiments seemed a hard act to follow, Clinton nonetheless held his own.

He recounted how Israel's chief rabbi caused President Harry Truman to weep when he told him: "God put you in your mother's womb so you would be the instrument to bring the rebirth of Israel after 2,000 years."

Clinton's firm warning to Arafat about curbing terrorism came across loud and clear: "The closer we get to peace, the more desperate the enemies of peace become. We cannot let terrorists dictate our future. We will not let their bombs or their bullets destroy our path to peace."

The president stressed the deep impression his visits to the Holy Land had made on him.

"In particular my first visit, a pilgrimage to Bethlehem, was seen through the eyes of a Christian...a Jew, Jesus, who gave the world the Christian New Testament. We are told in no uncertain terms that the 'peacemakers are blessed, and they will inherit the Earth'."

Arafat didn't delve much into religious themes this week. Perhaps as someone who has claimed to be a descendant of the Canaanites, and who, on another occasion, wanted to mount a Christmas laser display in Bethlehem of him flying in the sky arm in arm with Jesus, he decided it would be best to dodge the issue.

Yet he had his shining moment, too, when he called on his followers to annul the clauses of the PLO Covenant calling for the destruction of Israel, and his audience rose like one man to do so.

Now comes the \$64,000 question: Will Netanyahu stick to his guns and refuse to retreat one centimeter further from Judea and Samaria unless Arafat fulfills every single one of his Wye commitments?

If he does live up to this pledge, he need fear nothing by calling new elections in the near future. But let him be warned: Having invoked the Bible and his Jewish roots, he must beware the wrath of his ancestors' spirits - let alone that of the Almighty - should his born-again Zionism sink to the bottom of the Dead Sea.

As Albert Einstein once said: "God does not play dice."

سكرا من الامم

Weekender

A dream come true

The prominent Bustan Avraham ensemble plays at the Liturgica Festival tomorrow. Producer and dreamer Avshalom Farjun and Barry Davis show he got the group together



Avshalom Farjun (seated left) with his qanoun and the other members of Bustan Avraham

The last decade has seen increasing numbers of ethnic or east-west musical ensembles gracing clubs of varying sizes and degrees of prominence up and down the country, even occasionally achieving a modicum of public consciousness by playing the odd international festival or two.

One of the best of the east-west bunch this country has produced to date is Bustan Avraham. Founded by the band's producer Avshalom Farjun, in 1991, Avraham has thus far released four CDs - an impressively prolific output for groups belonging to this sector of the music market.

The band also appears regularly, making the occasional foray abroad.

Farjun's next stop on Bustan Avraham's busy schedule is a concert at the Jerusalem Theater tomorrow night at 8:30, as part of the annual Liturgica musical season.

"It was a dream I had nurtured for years - to establish a band which I felt was sorely missing in Israel at the time," says Farjun. "I was looking for a quality band which would incorporate all sorts of cultures which existed here."

In terms of variety of cultural influences, the band's personnel, at Farjun has definitely realized his dream. While Farjun himself could be termed the archetypal Israeli - his family has lived in this part of the world for 10 generations - guitarist and banjo player Herstein hails from

Poland, oud player Taiseer Elias from Lebanon, bass guitarist Emmanuel Mann comes from Paris, and flutist Amir Milstein spent his childhood in Brazil and Venezuela.

After completing a workshop of Persian music, which featured master classes given by ethnic musicians from as far away as the US and Azerbaijan - and included Bustan Avraham percussionist Zohar Fresco - Farjun says that putting his music in a new mouth was by contact with the best players he could lay his hands on.

Farjun is nothing if not a visionary. To put it bluntly, he displayed more than pure ambition in turning his dream into reality. As he freely admits: "I don't know

where I got the gall from to ask all these musicians to help me realize my dream."

Farjun explains that, while all the other members of the group were seasoned professionals, he himself had taken up the qanoun only two years earlier and, to this day, can't read sheet music.

To get his musicianship up to something akin to scratch, he devoted 15 hours a day to improving his mastery of the qanoun. "To begin with, I thought I'd just be the producer," he says.

However, dreamer or not, Farjun was very clear about what he wanted the group to achieve.

"We got together and I told the others that I wanted us to appear at the next Israel Festival, to release a CD within a year, and to do some gigs abroad."

Thus spake Avshalom Farjun and, amazingly, his entire vision came to pass.

IT IS not just Farjun who has "come of age," in musical terms, over the seven years of Bustan Avraham's existence.

"We have all progressed and matured," he declares, adding that Fresco is, today, one of the most in-demand purveyors of his particular brand of percussion playing. His prowess has caught the attention of world-renowned composer Philip Glass, who has asked Fresco to join him on a forthcoming international tour.

Nor is it merely in musical terms that Bustan Avraham can be considered truly representative of the cultural melting pot that is Israel. "We are seven very different people - both in terms of age and origin - and it's rare that we all have the same angle on the same thing," says Farjun.

But, rather than creating dele-

rious flashpoints in the group's machinations, the varied composition of the group's personnel only serves to enrich the musical end product. "It's not that we don't have differences of opinion," he explains, "in all matters, and also regarding music."

Coming from a family which has managed to chalk up the odd couple of hundred years in the Levant, from where does Farjun draw his own musical inspiration? "Classical eastern music," comes the immediate response. "Particularly classical Persian music. That, for me, is the highest level of music which has ever been attained," he states definitively.

Farjun explains that the earliest evidence of music, anywhere in the world, comes from Persia. His own instrument, the qanoun, is an offspring of the Persian santoor, as are the harpsichord, clavichord and, ultimately, the piano.

Farjun also cites Indian, Turkish and Arabic music among his influences and loves.

IT WAS Farjun's own multifaceted musical CV which eventually spawned Bustan Avraham, as well as the overriding feeling that the groups offering east-west syntheses, at the time, were missing the point.

"I was always interested in blends of different musical genres," he says. "I thought the mixes on offer were not successful. It was always a case of one culture dominating the other - either western music with a sprinkling of eastern ornamentation, or eastern music with a few western instruments and harmonies thrown in."

Farjun is quick to add that it is not easy to achieve a seamless cross-cultural blend. "It's a matter of quarter tones, of adopting a

completely different approach to music."

The secret to success in his line of work, explains Farjun, is to be open to other cultural influences. "You have to take the cotton wool out of your ears, and allow the sounds to penetrate."

It seems that the trick to producing something entirely original out of the musical tapestry is not to make an album with, for example, a Turkish track, a jazz track and a Persian track, but to fuse all the diverse cultural input generated by the members of the group. Farjun dubs the end result "a natural synthesis" which is appreciated by audiences, regardless of the geographical venue.

Bustan Avraham's first foreign gig was in Hong Kong, just a few months after the group's debut at the 1991 Israel Festival.

The director of the Hong Kong Festival of Asian Arts just happened to pass this way a short while before the Israel Festival and was so impressed with Bustan Avraham that he immediately invited the group to take part in the Hong Kong festival.

Farjun was surprised, and even caught unaware, by the audience's response to the group's performances there. "I took about 100 copies of the first discs with me but, after the first gig, they sold like hotcakes."

Apparently, the Hong Kong audience was so taken with the group's sound that they paid for the disc up front and left Farjun with a mailing address to send the CD to Hong Kong on his return to Israel.

THERE have been other international forays since then, including three trips to the US and appearances "in practically every country in Europe," says Farjun. Just last

month, Bustan Avraham played four European dates, including one show in a packed Queen Elizabeth Hall on London's South Bank.

However, the frequency of the group's foreign tours has tailed off somewhat in recent times. Farjun is not sure why this has happened, but does not rule out all-pervasive politics as a major factor.

"I think it's possibly because the world likes Israel a lot less these days - political factors are always an influence," he ventures.

Politics or not, Bustan Avraham has managed to achieve some impressive international synergies. The group's third album was created with generous help from internationally acclaimed British lyre player Ross Daly.

Meanwhile the last CD to date, *Famar*, features the world's most famous tabla player, Zakir Hussain - who played at the Jerusalem International Conference Center last month - and famed Indian flutist Hariprasad Chaurasia.

Even inveterate dreamer Farjun was surprised by the success of the Hussain-Chaurasia-Bustan Avraham project. "I didn't really believe it would happen," he says, explaining that the track with the two Indian players was recorded, signed, sealed and delivered within three hours flat - and all without rehearsing.

What of the future? Farjun feels that one of the group's drawbacks is the difficulty in applying a label to its music.

"When we're called world music, you can find us in music stores around the world together with Chava Alberstein and klezmer music."

While not denigrating either, Farjun feels that, at least in terms of pure market forces, Bustan Avraham has still to find its niche.

Going great in Haifa

By ADAM SCHENBERG

The Shmura is nestled in the midst of tall pines at the bottom of the hill in Roshana, Haifa, not far from the Mitzpe Center. The bar opened in 1986 to much controversy due to its location in a residential neighborhood.

Since all ordinances were in order, however, the three brothers Yossi, Benny and Avi Avraham, who own the bar, were able to go forward with the business. Very soon it became the best bar in Haifa. Now their small enterprise has grown into a posh catering business, a disco, and also an excellent restaurant.

Bartender Haim Lior has been known to give students from the Technion and Haifa University extra shots of tequila in their reasonably priced, one-liter Goldstar beers; and to persuade his clientele to dance to Irish music. His understudies loyally continue these unorthodox and generous practices.

There are sometimes poetry readings amidst the wooden tables and the sounds of bubbling fountains. And Yossi says that the place attracts numerous celebrities - including many MKs, as well as soccer players from both Maccabi Haifa and Hapoel Haifa.

The Shmura has always had excellent food. I highly recommend the chicken fingers, breaded with sesame seeds and dipped in thick tahina sauce. Also, the steaks and salads, cheese platters and home-made olives are superior to the usual coffee-shop and bar fare. Prices are cheaper than in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem - and you get more than usual for your money. The service is excellent.

Mr. Carmel has a magical charm once you leave the polluted suburbs.

And then there are the rose gardens, the potted plants, the wandering Jews, the begonia, the red columbines, the irises and palms, in addition to the sculptures. Whether it's summer and hot or winter and rainy, revelers enjoy the Shmura under a heated/air-conditioned tent-like covering. The place is usually packed, especially on dance nights and weekends. Take your pick: either the secluded picnic tables outside or the fancy furniture inside. The Shmura is so roomy and architecturally beautiful, it's like a local Xanadu. And there are no problems finding parking - they have their own lot.

The pastoral setting and general atmosphere is classy, while the music is neither too yuppified nor a load of techno garbage. They play an excellent selection of Israeli and English/American classic and contemporary rock.

At various times, one can also hear blues and jazz, salsa and samba from their large collection, and the sound system is up to par. Tonight the singer Sylvester will be the special guest, with a selection of Mediterranean songs. The owners seem to have an intuitive flare for knowing when to crank the tunes and when to soften the volume. I give the Shmura five stars. If you've never been there, you're missing the best the north can offer.

The Shmura, 38 Derech PICA, Haifa

Dance on my mind

Dance choreographer Ido Tadmor talks about some of his favorite works

Six years ago, Ido Tadmor tore a thigh muscle, and doctors told him that he might never dance again.

Nine months later he was back onstage, dancing with the added passion of a resurrection.

Born in Ramat Hasharon 34 years ago, Tadmor started dancing when he was 12. He says he was a chubby outsider "who never wanted to do anything anyone else did."

Dance consumed him. He started his career with Bat Dor, went on to dance with Batseva and then became principal dancer for Lar Lubovitch, one of the world's greatest choreographers and shapers of contemporary dance.

He'd started choreographing in the mid-Eighties, mostly soloing for himself, but began to think more seriously about making dance during the months his leg took to heal.

The result was the establishment of his own company and *Sima's Pot* (1995), a lyrical, powerful and witty dance piece that put him on the map. Cell followed that same year and *Uranus* in 1997.

Last year he was also bombarded with prizes. He won the Prime Minister's Prize both as Dancer and Artist of the Year, the Tel Aviv Municipality and Omani La'am ("Art for the People") also named him Artist of the Year.

Next Thursday his newest dance premieres at the Suzanne Dellal Center in Tel Aviv. It's called *Neta*, for his mother. She danced with Mia Arbatova, who did so much for dance here.

Neta Tadmor appears with her son on video during the piece, which is at once a collage and a meditation on the private and the professional. The work contains excerpts from his previous works. Here he talks about the dances that have been milestones in his life.

1. *Giselle* choreographed by Mats Ek of Sweden's Cullberg Ballet.

"His choreography brings the world of legend to the real world. He manages to transmit romance in the most contemporary idiom, talking about things we all feel, like being utterly swayed by love. 'In the classic interpretation of Giselle she dies because her lover abandons her. In Ek's interpretation, she ends up in a mental hospital, which is a kind of emotional death.'"

2. *Smoke*, also by Eks. "It's a duet for a classical ballerina and an old man. Eks made it for



(Chai Dagim)

his elder brother. The dance talks to me because it represents a far more tolerant world which encourages and allows people to live the way that they think is best."

3. *Concerto 622* choreographed by Lar Lubovitch

"It's a male duet that I danced in 1990 at Lincoln Center when I danced with the company. It's one of the few male duets that has no sexual connotations but speaks of pure friendship."

"I'd seen the dance two years previously and dreamed of dancing it. Lar invited me to join the company, and a week after I arrived, he told me I'd dance this piece. I thought I'd faint, and to dance at the Lincoln Center, in Avery Fisher Hall with the New York Philharmonic playing [Mozart's] music was altogether out of this world."

4. *Tabula Rasa* choreographed by Ohad Naharin

"I danced that in 1989 when I was with Batseva. This is one of those dances which communicates movement in its purest form. There is not a boring minute in it, and it's one of the first of his dances in which Ohad created a genuinely new way of moving. It was physically challenging to dance."

5. *Cloven Kingdom* choreographed by Paul Taylor "I danced this at Bat Dor in 1986. It's a work that anticipated its time by several years, because it deals with corruption in society and the exploitation of the servers by the served. "Taylor made this piece in the Seventies, before materialism took over society. This is a very physical work, and hard on the body, so it was a challenge, too. I enjoyed delivering the message of this dance."

- Helen Kaye

Hot tip

By DANIELA SCHENBERG

Tel Aviv

No doubt about it, the holidays definitely favor kids and families, and the proof is in the theater. Musicals are ubiquitous tonight, so give in and sing along, to any number of options: Bustan Avraham plays on Saturday night at Habimah, which, with its sumptuous sets and rich nostalgic music, is sure fun. Starts at 8:30 p.m.; call (03) 620-7777.

Head around the corner from Habimah to the Mann Auditorium and straight into Yigal Mossinson's classic *Hasamba*, which has been transformed into a musical for youth. The show plays all day

today (starting 9:15 a.m.), at three show times tomorrow, and again all day on Sunday. Call (03) 528-8653.

Finally, with the ever-affable Zvika Hadar leading them, *The Three Musketeers* can't ever go wrong; catch this classic at the Cinemas today or tomorrow, with three shows each day. Call (03) 562-0999.

Once you tire of the family, abandon family entertainment, rest up and then head back out for the music of the night. Corinne Allal, the savvy pop icon with smooth, soulful melodies, performs at Logos (off the Carmel Market) tonight with her band, starting at 10. (03) 516-1176.

In the opposite direction, the northern area of the city is served well by Appropo Zabala where Latin Jazz is the theme of the evening.

Also starting at 10 tonight. (03) 648-7098.

Saturday night, kick off your shoes to *Barefoot*, the latest repertoire of those pillars of Israeli ethnic music, Habreira Hatviv, led by Shlomo Bar. Eastern and western music form a powerful combination in their work. The performance will be held at the Inbal

Ethnic Center (behind Suzanne Dellal), starting at 8:30 p.m.

Things may be winding down at Suzanne Dellal following the fall festivals, but the Young Kibbutz Dance Company is going strong. See them on Saturday morning, at 11:30 at Suzanne Dellal, with *Pictures at an Exhibition* and *A Guide for the Orchestra*. Call (03) 510-5656.

THEATER shows some new faces this weekend. Habimah's premieres are always a good dose of "see and be seen," if you can fight the crowds. But tonight's play will definitely top any high-society crowd: *Closer* is a year-old play (it first opened in London in 1997), that tells the story of four strangers who fall in love. Sex and love in the modern context are given a harsh, even brutal treatment in the work, which displays the cruelty of passion.

Opens tonight at 8:30, and plays on Friday at 2 p.m. and Saturday at 8:30 p.m. as well. Call (03) 620-7777.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem doesn't need rock 'n'

roll when it has folk celebs and Jewish rockers to fill its halls.

The more mellow of the two, American folk singer/songwriter Hugh Blumenfeld is on his first Israel tour and will be playing a house concert at Gilo. Call Laura Fink for information, at (02) 642-8399.

But for some heavy - and holy - action, join the Jewish musical fiesta of the Reb Shlomo Carlebach Concert tonight. This bash of local soul sounds features Chaim Dovid and his group, fresh from their US tour.

At Merkaz Hapayis, Hai Taib St. at 8 p.m. Contact Reuven Bendov, at (050) 962085.

Leave it to Habamah, the visual theater venue, to do something eccentric like celebrate Purim when everybody else is lighting Hanukkah candles.

Slight Depressions in Shushan is a commedia dell'arte performance based on the Scroll of Esther, but is lots of rollicking fun, and will play at Habamah tonight at 9. Call (02) 673-3814.

Another new play is found at the Khan tonight, as Isen's *The Lady from the Sea*, makes its Israeli debut. Starts at 8:30.

And Points Beyond

If you kicked off your shoes before, you can retrieve them in Haifa, where "The Shoes" will be performing at the Jepto Club tonight, starting at 10:45.

But theater is the real source of entertainment this evening around the towns.

In Rehovot, *The Actor*, by Hillel Mittelpunkt, is at the Wix Auditorium, starting at 8:30 p.m.; while *The Promise*, about three Leningrad residents in 1942, goes on the stage at the Ramat Gan Hasifriya Theater, tonight at 8:30. Call (03) 579-9290.

The weekend ends with a special treat, on behalf of the British Council: Edward Petherbridge performs *Krupp's Last Tape*, by Samuel Beckett, on Saturday night. At the Kfar Sava Sapir Auditorium, starting at 9. Call (09) 764-9230.

Singing and dancing are also available: the Karmon Dance Company performs at Beersheba Heichal Hatarbut on Saturday night at 8:30, and Ehud Banai appears on Saturday night in Haifa, at 9 at the City Auditorium. Call (04) 838-4777.

Weekender Food & Drink



Beauty on the plate

By JUDITH WEINRAUB

Why does restaurant food look better than the dishes we serve our dinner guests at home? Sometimes so much better that you wonder if chefs have some kind of secret formula for dressing up a plate.

As a matter of fact, they do. But the good news is that the principles used to make the food that comes out of contemporary restaurant kitchens look so dazzling can be learned and imitated. Chefs pick them up in cooking school or by working for other chefs; if they learn them, so can the rest of us (maybe).

Several notable American chefs have agreed to share their guidelines on food presentation. No one's promising that a home cook's first efforts will look like the dishes in high-end restaurants, but they will look special. And yes, to get it right, you do have to practice.

The First Impression
Chefs know the visual impact of a dish sets the tone for the meal. "We eat with our eyes first," says Francois Dionot, founder and director of L'Academie de Cuisine in suburban Maryland.

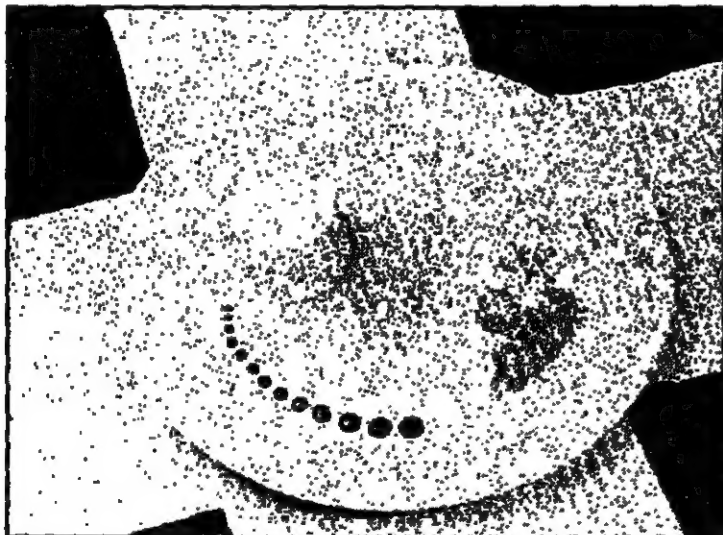
Patrick O'Connell, chef/co-owner of the much-heralded Inn at Little Washington in Washington, Virginia, says, "Things taste better if they're beautiful. People light up. The whole idea is to lose yourself in the experience and forget your problems. If you can transport them with the visual and deliver with the taste, you're just about there."

The Plate
Chefs liken the plate to the canvas of a painting. The rim of the plate is the painting's frame. In search of a large canvas, they seek out large plates – the bigger the better. "The more space there is to frame the food, the more impact you can get," says O'Connell. And what about that frame? Chefs approach the rim in different ways. O'Connell often plays with it. For his sesame-crusted salmon, for example, he likes to paint the rim of a black plate with sesame oil and dust it with lightly toasted seeds (for the aroma as well as the visual impact).

At Michel Richard Citronelle in Washington DC, chef Michel Richard likes to use the inner edge of the oversize rims of his soup bowls for halos of tiny potato croquettes or sauteed diced apple.

Bob Kinkad, chef at Kinkad's, however, is resolutely against outer-edge antics.

"The rim is sacrosanct," he says. "It frames your work. All this non-



sense of sprinkling something on it is just horrible. Invariably, some waiter will stick a thumbprint in it, and it looks like a murder scene."

Then there is the question of plain china or fancy, white or colored. Home cooks are, of course, limited. But given a choice, use simple plates for more-complicated dishes, and fancy plates for more straightforward ones like steak or grilled fish, says Jeff Tomchek, the chef at McCormick & Schmick's in Reston, Virginia. The color of a plate is important, too: Warm tones (yellow, red, earthy browns, gentle greens) are particularly welcoming. Plain white plates – the most versatile – emphasize the colors and shapes of the food.

Never feel you have to fill the entire plate. Every chef we talked to emphasized that less is more. "Crowding the plate is like putting on too much makeup," says Richard.

Abundance is fine for family platters, but not for individual servings.

"Using negative space is important," says Kinkad. "Some American chefs tend to really fill the plate, but I try to pull back – the plates look better that way."

So what do you do with the vegetables that don't fit on the plate? Chefs seem to agree on that one, too: It's not only legitimate but desirable to present them in serving dishes on the table.

The Arrangement

This is a make-or-break category. Study the way plates are organized the next time you go out to eat. Look at food magazines. At the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, students are taught an acronym: BUFE, for balance, unity, focal point and flow.

"Balance" refers to the selection of ingredients and cooking methods. The ingredients should go together (choosing foods that are in season at the same time is one

way to do that). But the cooking methods should be varied – not all fried or all poached or all roasted. "Unity" refers to the overall look of the plate.

"The foods on the plate should appear as if they were meant to be together – not like the old style, where there were three or four piles of things on a plate," says Ron Desantis, who coordinates the CIA's exams for Master Chefs. "Instead of piles, think of a vegetable stew in the center, and around it some roasted potatoes, and then grilled meat or fish on top of that. Now you have unity."

A "focal point" – usually the main ingredient of the dish – gives the eye something to home in on – "like the spot your eye is drawn to in a great painting," Desantis explains.

A tuna steak sliced and fanned out, for example, can be an attractive focal point. A hunk of tuna steak wouldn't be. "And then once you've absorbed the focal point," he continues, "the eye starts to move around the plate [and look] at the things you've placed around it." That's the "flow."

The temptation is to put the main ingredient in the center of the plate.

"It's a gross generalization," says Kinkad, "but by and large, your presentations look better when you keep the main item of the dish in the center. Or," he adds, "just slightly off-center."

As for where to place the other elements, many chefs think in terms of a clock, with the accompaniments and garnishes at different hours, perhaps one at 12, another at 5 and another at 7. Or 3, 6 and 9; or 10, 2 and 6.

"It's aesthetically pleasing in a simple sort of way," says Kinkad. Nobody, however, is suggesting that this virtually has to be worked out on graph paper. O'Connell serves one salad by dropping it – like pickup sticks – on the plate.

"It has a startling, spontaneous look," he says.

Height
In recent years, a skyscraper approach to food presentation became chic, with extremes inevitable and often unwieldy. "You don't want to have to take a dish apart to eat it," says DC Coast chef Jeffrey Tunks. "You have to have some height to the plate to avoid a flat look, but not so much that you need a physics degree to build it."

But many chefs use verticality to draw in the eye. "I don't do it so much, but it does get people's attention," says Richard. "People see a dish [with height] and say, 'What is that? I want it.'"

A measured approach to vertical food sets restaurant food apart from home-cooked meals. For example, many chefs think through their dishes starting with a "base" – say risotto, polenta or ratatouille – under the other ingredients. The home cook should do this cautiously – particularly if trying to position something solid like a chicken breast or fish fillet atop that softer polenta, risotto or ratatouille.

The trick: Cut the chicken or fish into smaller pieces before cooking. That way, the pieces can be propped up against one another in an artful manner.

Contrasts
Contrasts of color, texture and cooking methods are considered appealing to the eye, which is why, for example, you often see something chopped up and bright (like red pepper) as a garnish for something pale (like fish).

"It's important to think of contrasts," says Dionot. "Say you have an endive salad with a creamy dressing. Look for a dark decoration – a little bit of crushed walnut, or toasted almonds, or slivers of dark olives."

Contrasting textures are desirable, too, he says, like a pistachio garnish for chocolate mousse.

O'Connell likes to contrast hot and cold, richness and tartness, like a cooked meat placed on top of a salad or starch dressed with a vinaigrette. Kinkad is known for contrasting crunchy foods with softer ones, and using different shapes.

The Garnish

Garnish with ingredients that are integral to the dish – a sprig of thyme, for example, for a dish flavored with thyme.

Or with things that taste good together – a dollop of sour cream and chives on black-bean soup.

Or with things that emphasize freshness – herbs that are in season. The corollary is just as impor-



By PHYLLIS GLAZER

Coffee seminars

Ilan's Cafe became an "in" spot in Tel Aviv years ago, and there are still people lining up at his cafe across from City Hall. Ilan's new branch at Kiryat Ahdim is offering three-hour coffee seminars, at which you can enjoy a good cup of coffee and sandwiches, and learn how coffee grows, the difference between coffees and coffee-makers, etc. The seminar costs NIS 80, is given in Hebrew (though Ilan translates a lot), and includes a tasting and a 15% discount on anything you buy in the store. For details call Toby Shaked at (03) 649-0004 or 052-599896.

Special coffee

Americans are the greatest coffee drinkers in the world, and yet their per-capita consumption of coffee has dropped drastically during the last two decades, primarily due to health concerns over the possible effects of caffeine. Despite this, during the last decade, a new trend was born: many Americans figured that if they're going to drink coffee, it might as well be really good coffee. The road to Starbucks' multi-million-dollar take-away gourmet cafe chain was born.

All the different types of coffee in the world fall into two basic categories: Arabica and Robusta.

Arabica is the finer type of coffee bean, capturing 75% of the

world's coffee market, though only 10% of that is considered specialty coffee. Specialty coffee beans enjoy special treatment throughout their growth period, harvest and roasting.

Robusta plants, far harder and more disease-resistant than Arabica, have twice the amount of caffeine as Arabica plants. You'll find Robusta mostly in instant coffees and industrial products like cappuccino-type products, coffee ice cream, candies and dairy products and even as a caffeine boost in cola drinks.

Instant coffee is considered an abomination to coffee aficionados. First manufactured at the beginning of the century, it took years and billions of dollars to convince people around the world that a dried extract of coffee beans mixed with hot water was really coffee.

Most people like to have a cup of coffee at least once a day. As the nights become colder during the end of the holiday week and just before the start of the final year before the millennium, a little "faced" coffee might be nice too.

CAFE ROYALE

1 cup of brewed coffee (not instant)
1 sugar cube
1 Tbsp. brandy or cognac

Pour the hot brewed coffee into a cup. Place a sugar cube on a tablespoon and fill the spoon with cognac. Ignite with a match, let the sugar melt for a moment and stir into the coffee. Serve immediately. (Serves 1.)

CLAUDIA RODEN'S CAFE BORGIA FOR DRIVERS

120 gr. bitter or milk chocolate sugar or honey to taste
4 Tbsp. sweet cream
4 cups brewed coffee (not

instant)
cinnamon, whipped cream, cocoa or grated lemon peel

In a small pot, melt the chocolate over low heat. Add the honey or sugar if desired and 4 Tbsp. sweet cream. Gradually add 4 cups coffee and whip with a wire whisk till frothy. Keep hot on low heat until ready to pour into cups. Garnish with whipped cream and your choice of spice.

As a variation, you can add 4 cloves and a stick of cinnamon along with the coffee to the brew basket of your coffeemaker. (Serves 4.)

CAFE VELVET

½ cup brandy
2½ cups brewed coffee
1 Tbsp. honey or sugar
½ cup soft whipped cream
cinnamon and/or nutmeg for sprinkling

Mix together the brandy, coffee and honey and pour into small cups. Divide the whipped cream between the cups and sprinkle with freshly grated nutmeg and/or cinnamon. (Serves 3-4.)

Best deal in town

It almost doesn't pay to cook. For only NIS 19, you can get a delicious tofu and mushroom dish, served with a small Chinese salad and fried rice. At Hai Phong Noodles (formerly the Vietnamese Restaurant) at 100 Hayarkon Street, no main dish costs above NIS 28, and most are around NIS 24.

The food is good, as is the service, and if you don't feel like eating out you can have the food delivered. Although it doesn't have a kashrut certificate, the restaurant does not serve pork or seafood and is one of the only places in town that serves good tofu dishes.

this would be a healthier way to try and make cheese since not only healthy bacteria grow at room temperature.

I found barley flour in the health-food store, and since we all like the taste of pearl barley, I decided to buy it. The problem is that I'm afraid to use it in anything. Can I use it in regular baking? How can I use it in cooking? Was it worth buying? Also, can you please tell me the nutritional content of pearl barley?

– Esther Ravenfeld, Beersheba

Yes, it was worth buying! Barley flour can help increase dietary fiber in baked goods. It does not, however, contain significant amounts of gluten, so it can't be used alone, but together with wheat flour. You can substitute one quarter of the total amount of wheat flour used in yeast breads. In cookies and quick breads (those made with baking powder or soda), you can use half barley flour and half wheat flour. It is also a good thickener for soups and stews.

A cup of cooked pearl barley has 193 calories, 3.5 gr. protein, 0.7 gr. fat, no cholesterol, 17 mg. calcium, 9 gr. dietary fiber, 2 mg. iron, 35 mg. magnesium, 85 mg. phosphorus, 145 mg. potassium, 1.2 mg. zinc, 3.2 mg. niacin and 26 mcg. of folic acid. Pretty good, I'd say.

What is calcium propionate and why does it appear in sliced breads?

– Shella Newman, Haifa

Calcium propionate is a preservative added to prolong the bread's freshness. It is considered benign, but you might want to avoid it if you are sensitive to additives. Propionic acid occurs naturally in Swiss cheese.

Phyllis Glazer can be contacted c/o The Jerusalem Post Magazine, P.O. Box 81, Jerusalem, 91000, or by e-mail: phyllisglazer@jpost.co.il. Do not send stamped, self-addressed envelopes, as inquiries cannot be answered individually. Feedback also appears in The Jerusalem Post Magazine on Friday.

A few ideas on plating to start you thinking

• If you're new to "plating" meals, Kinkad's chef Bob Kinkad warns, experiment first with cold foods, rather than hot or frozen ones. That way, nothing gets cold or melts while you're figuring out how you want to display the food.

• Keep things simple. "If I design a plate that takes half an hour to build, we have to change it," says Citronelle chef Michel Richard.

• If you're serving more than two courses, don't try to place each of them. Ian at Little Washington chef Patrick O'Connell suggests serving a cold first course that can be plated in advance, followed by a salad that can be tossed and dropped on the plate or served at the table, then a plated, but "bone simple," main course with side dishes people can serve themselves at the table.

• To turn soup into a tour de force, serve it with an accompa-

niment in the center. Bring the soup bowls, containing only the accompaniment, to the table, then pour the soup around the garnish from a ladle or a gravy boat.

"It achieves two things," says DC Coast chef Jeff Tunks. "It preserves the integrity of the garnish, and keeps the soup warm longer."

Tunks suggests that the home chef try a tiny log of goat cheese sprinkled with chopped chives and tomato soup, or baby salmon croquettes surrounded by asparagus soup.

• Soup doesn't have to go in soup bowls. O'Connell suggests serving a tray of demitasse cups filled with soup as a prelude to dinner. (You can keep a pitcher of soup in a boiling water bath until you're ready to pour, he explains.) "Let guests sip that, and then walk in and find a beautiful first course already plated on the table."

• A little ball of cheesecloth in lemon water does the trick.

• Food that looks maneuvered: "You don't want home food to look uptight or overhauled or tortured," says O'Connell. "If you have fun doing it, that will show in your work. If you're terrified, that will show, too."

If all this seems overwhelming, remember that chefs didn't learn the art of food presentation overnight. Plating takes practice, and the confidence that comes with trial and error.

Finally, no matter how exquisitely plated the food is, the first goal is to make it taste wonderful.

• Pastry bags are not just for pastry or icing. "There are lots of neat things you can do with piping bags," Kinkad says. "You can control sauces, mayonnaise, mashed potatoes, any vegetable puree you can name. On one tuna dish we make, we put wasabi [hot green Japanese horseradish-like paste] in a pastry bag to pipe out a leaf shape."

• Garnishes and accompaniments look better in odd numbers. Three rather than two, five rather than six, and so on.

• Contemporary salads – inventive combinations of chopped vegetables and fruits – deliver color and contrasting textures. "They add a bright, raw, crunchy appearance that grabs you immediately and says, 'I'm fresh,'" says the Culinary Institute's Ron Desantis. "Once you see freshness, it's already appealing."

– Judith Weinraub
(The Washington Post)

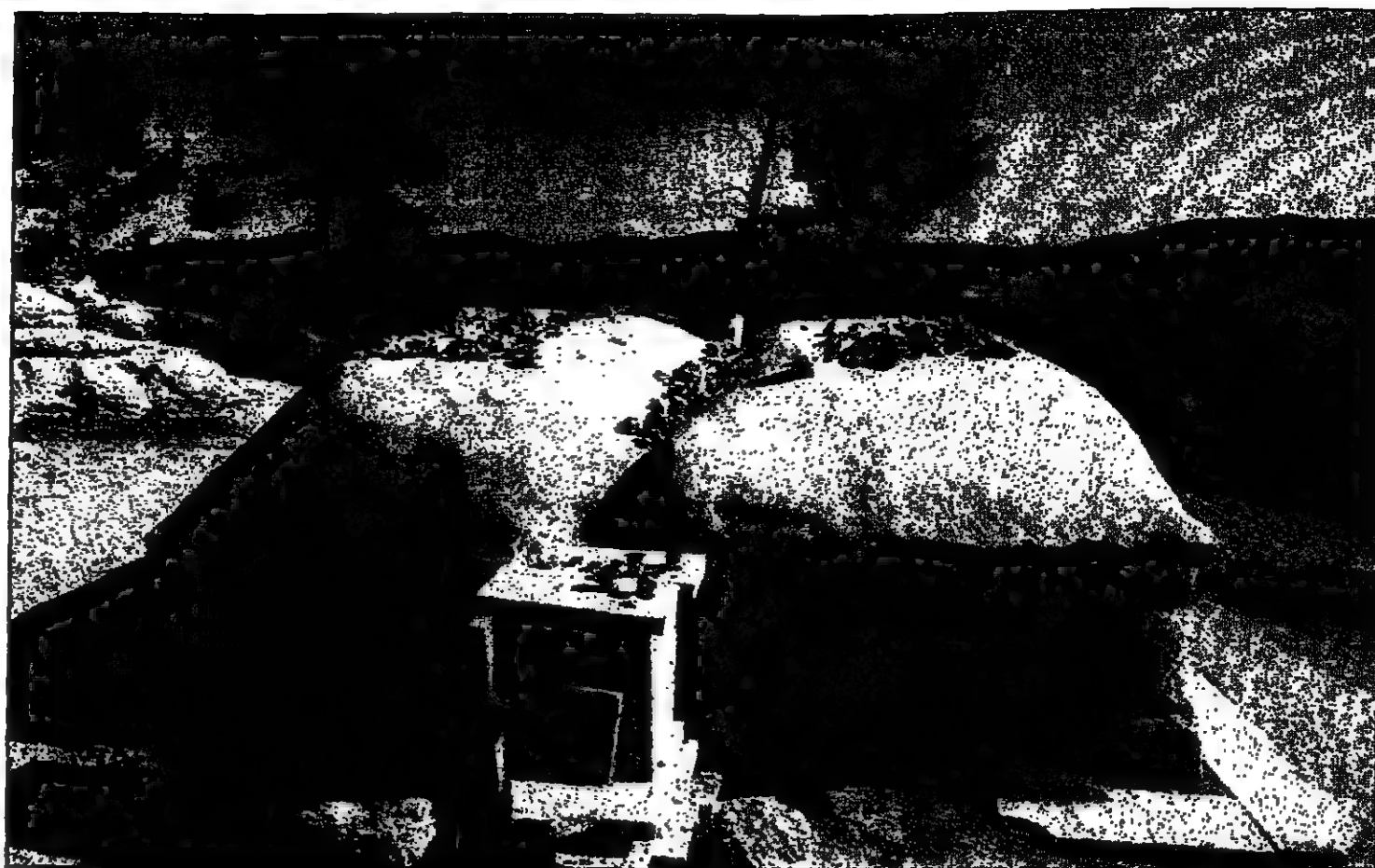
Places of pilgrimage **Weekender** Travel

Day Tripper

By Haim Shapiro



A man prays at the Tomb of Samson.



The tombs of Samson and Manoah, his father, sit side by side on a hilltop. Samson's tomb, generally covered by many more stones, is a favorite pilgrimage spot for barren women.

Tombs of Jewish sages may not have been multiplying in number, but they are becoming more evident on the local landscape and more widespread as well.

In the past, one expected to find such tombs, mostly from the period of the Talmud, in various parts of Galilee, but I recently saw two tombs of biblical personalities in the Judean hills, west of Jerusalem.

I visited them together with Ya'acov "Yaki" Cohen, the proprietor of the restaurant at the Masua Lookout in the JNF forest on the road from Jerusalem to

Beit Guvrin. Cohen, who has become religious, is a tour guide who specializes in sites with religious themes. He himself is a figure almost as interesting as the sites, with a spreading beard and a large, turban-like head covering.

The first tomb we visited was that of Dan, the son of the patriarch Jacob. It is relatively easy to find, identified by a sign just about 1.5 kilometers west of the Shimon Junction on the road from Beit Shemesh to Tel Aviv. According to Cohen, this tomb used to be almost unknown, a place where mystics would come

secretly and recite Psalms on the new moon.

Today it is a bustling center of activity. On the day we visited, there were two buses of pupils from religious schools, as well as several carloads of other visitors, who appeared to be both secular and religious.

The tomb and its surroundings epitomize the popular Middle Eastern religious site, which, while exuding enthusiasm, lacks an esthetic touch.

At the focal point is the tomb itself — an ancient, domed, stone building regarded as sacred by Moslems as well as Jews. Inside

the tomb, a few candles burned and a few worshippers prayed earnestly. Cohen, who noted that prayers recited at the tomb have been known to cure illnesses, said that such prayers are effective because of the worthiness of the sage.

Built on as a recent addition is a large hall with tables for eating and studying and shelves lined with sacred books. The building here was all completed on a volunteer basis, and apparently there was no architect or approval of any local authority.

The floors are paved with marble slabs, while the walls appear to be made of sections of metal paneling. On one side is a yeshiva with a large sign identifying it as the yeshiva of Rabbi Sharabi. Even today, on nights of the new moon, visitors come to pray, march around the tomb and blow a shofar.

IT IS something of a shock to come out of this atmosphere and drive along the forest road parallel to the highway, a road that is known as Derech Hapessulim, the road of sculptures.

In isolated niches along the forest, one can see the sculptures, the work of a wide range of Israeli artists in a variety of mediums.

A sign leads to the Tzora Park, the original site of Kibbutz Tzora, which served as a way station for the young people carrying food and medicine to Jerusalem in the

days before the Burma Road was completed.

It is, as it were, a sort of secular place of pilgrimage not far from the other places of pilgrimage. Here, there is an ancient wine press, a reminder of the thriving wine industry that flourished in the area in biblical times.

There are also signs pointing to the tomb of Samson, although I would find it difficult to retrace my way there without the help of a guide who knew the area well. Cohen (at tel. 02-99 12464 or 051-202352) says that some visitors find the tomb easily, having been given explicit instructions in dreams.

If the tomb of Dan is an experience in popular religious expression, that of Samson is virtually untouched.

On a hilltop, one finds side by side two mounds painted blue, one the tomb of Samson, the other of Manoah, his father. The two mounds are identical, but that of Samson may be identified because on it are far more small stones left by visiting pilgrims. It is, Cohen says, a favorite place of pilgrimage for barren women.

Nearby is a single picnic table and one can see the remains of fires made by visitors. Further on are the remains of an ancient oil press and all around are ancient cisterns. There is even a small water basin in the ground, embedded with mosaic tiles.



Ya'acov Cohen, here praying near Samson's tomb, is a newly religious tour guide who specializes in sites with religious themes.

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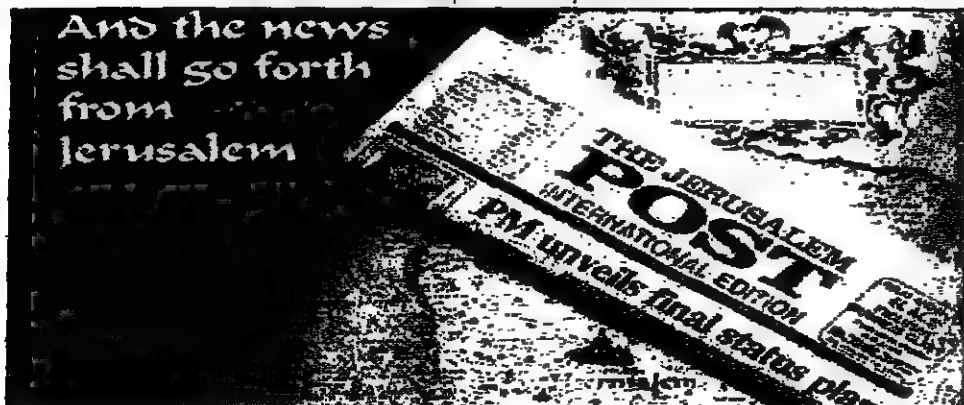
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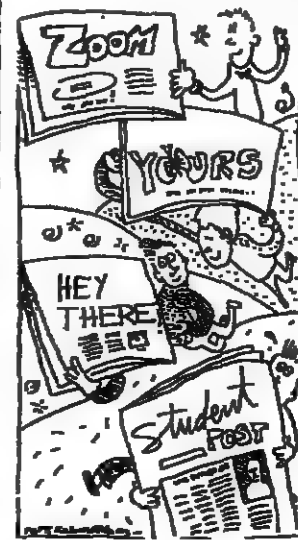
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Bridge

Do you play Stayman?

East dealer
Both sides vulnerable

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♠ 9 8 2
♥ A K 9 7
♦ A 5
♣ A 7 6 4

West East

♠ Q J 10 6 5 ♠ 4 3
♥ 8 6 4 3 ♥ 5
♦ 9 ♦ K J 10 8 6 4
♣ 9 5 2 ♣ Q K 8 3

South (Goldman)

♠ A K 7
♥ Q J 10 2
♦ Q 7 3 2
♣ K J

Matthew Granovetter can be reached by e-mail at matt@bridgetoday.com.

After Stayman introduced the convention in his book, *Do You Play Stayman?* other players began to find more uses for the bid and invented more "Staymans."

By ANGEL SWOIST

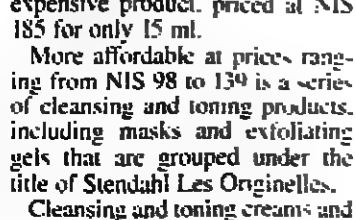
3. ...d4 4. ...c3 5. ...d2 6. ...d7 5. ...dxc3 6. ...dxc4 is possible after which White can either take 11. ...c4 12. ...dxc2 White wins a pawn but White has compensation

Black resigned for after 31.
...bxc6 32. cxb4 leaves White a
rook up.

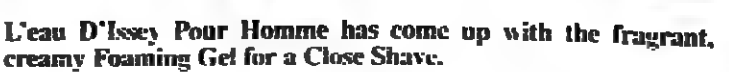
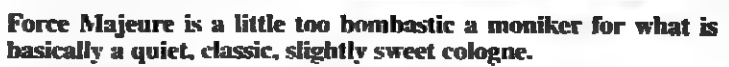
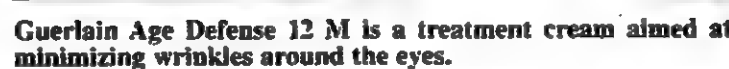


By OWEN FAY CASHMAN

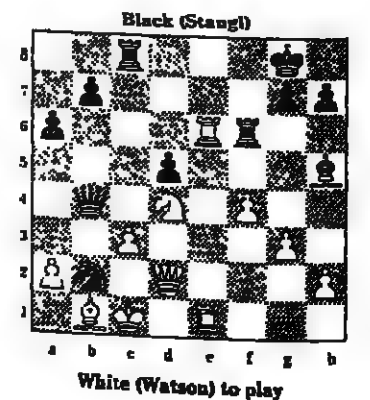
BACK to female beauty aids. Aware that complexions change in tandem with changes in the weather, Sisley of France has produced Double Blush Botanique, a compact with two shades of powdered rouge, which can be used



Finally, Wella is forever putting out new hair products. Its new Kolleston 2000 color cream developer containing Vitamin C is to be used in conjunction with Wella oxon.



L'eau D'Issey Pour Homme has come up with the fragrant, creamy **Foaming Gel** for a Close Shave.



White (Watson) to play

William Watson (White)
Markus Stangl (Black)
Bundesliga, 17.10.1998

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. f3. Do not try this at home! Seriously though, it shows what a lousy opening the Caro-Kann is when a ridiculous move like 3. f3 is playable against it.

3. ...e6 4. ...c3 5. ...d2 6. ...d7 5. ...dxc3 6. ...dxc3 dxc4 is possible after which White can either take 11. ...c4 12. ...e2 13. ...b6 wins a pawn but White has compensation

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هكذا من الازل

Report: 25 IOC members may have been bribed

Olympic official: Atlanta, Nagano, Sydney and Salt Lake City involved

ZURICH, Switzerland (AP) — The Olympic executive whose accusations of bribery and blackmail rocked the IOC says as many as 25 members might have received favors or cash for votes in four recent elections to choose sites for the games.

"That's the absolute maximum because I trust all the others," Marc Hodler was quoted as saying in yesterday's editions of USA Today. The International Olympic Committee has 115 members.

Hodler, an 80-year-old senior member of the IOC executive board, has not identified any IOC members who may have taken bribes.

The IOC began investigating the successful bid by Salt Lake City for the 2002 Winter Olympics after Salt Lake organizers disclosed they had made payments of nearly \$400,000 in scholarship funds to 13 people, including six relatives of IOC members.

Hodler also said Salt Lake organizers have turned over 25 pages listing pay-

ments in its "humanitarian assistance" program.

"They've got a lot of information. They're not limited to the scholarships," Hodler told the newspaper.

Hodler said the new summary details \$630,000 in payments, some of it unrelated to IOC members.

Earlier, Hodler said he went public Saturday with allegations of corruption in the Olympic bidding process because he feared a cover-up of the Salt Lake scandal.

"The feeling crept up on me that certain people are afraid of this case and wanted to sweep everything under the carpet," Hodler told the Zurich daily *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* yesterday.

"Because of various misunderstandings, I was under the impression that some of my colleagues might try not to uncover mistakes made by some members of the IOC and lay all the blame on the Salt Lake City organizing committee," he also told Zurich's *Tages-Anzeiger* daily. "I'm not acting for Salt

Lake City but for justice," Hodler said Saturday that Salt Lake City had been "blackmailed" by agents promising to secure votes during its Olympic bid.

He said four agents, including one member of the IOC, had been involved in vote-buying schemes over the past 10 years.

He cited supposed irregularities in the elections of at least four Olympic cities — Atlanta; Nagano, Japan; Sydney, Australia; and Salt Lake.

"In don't enjoy being a member of a club that has a bad reputation," Hodler told the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*.

"I'm a lawyer and, as such, I can't do anything without proof. In contrast to what you might believe, I'm probably the best friend of IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch."

Hodler said he wanted to "exert pressure" on the IOC to change its election procedure for Olympic cities, putting the decision in the hands of a small group rather than the entire IOC membership.



Olympic executive Marc Hodler: 'I'm not acting for Salt Lake City but for justice.'

(AP)

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Dallas gives St. Louis the blues



DALLAS (AP) — Brett Hull was eager to play against anybody after missing seven of the previous eight games with a groin injury. The fact that it was his former St. Louis Blues teammates made it extra special.

The night was a rousing success for Hull as he scored twice Tuesday night to lead the Stars to a 7-3 victory.

"I was hoping that I wouldn't get hurt again," said Hull, who has been bothered by the injury all season and had one aborted comeback earlier this year. "I was nervous before the game, but I got over it once the first period was over. The Blues are a good club, and if my two goals helped, that's all I can ask."

Hull's power-play deflection late in the first period put the Stars in front 3-2. He added his eighth goal on a breakaway late in the second period to push Dallas' advantage to 6-3.

Hull's teammates knew the game would be special for Hull, especially after he missed the Stars' first trip to St. Louis on Nov. 21 because of a bruised kidney. Hull signed a three-year, \$17 million free agent deal with the Stars last summer, and was anxious to get the first meeting behind him.

"He was excited to play," teammate Mike Modano said. "He was looking forward to it." In other NHL games, Carolina blanked Edmonton 3-0, Pittsburgh edged Tampa Bay 3-2 in overtime and the New York Islanders defeated San Jose 1-0.

Dallas coach Ken Hitchcock said Hull's presence on the ice seemed to distract the Blues.

"Because it was St. Louis, it was special and our players recognized it," Hitchcock said. "Hull's a distraction for the other team because it could be one shot and in." Brian Skrudland's second-period goal snapped a 3-3 tie to give the Stars the lead for good as Dallas ran its unbeaten streak to six (4-0-2) and improved to 11-2-2 at home.

Joe Nieuwendyk also had two goals as the Stars had their biggest scoring outburst in exactly a year. On Dec. 15, 1997, the Stars beat the Buffalo Sabres 8-4.

The Blues, 0-4-2 in their last six games, tried not to get caught up in the Hull hoopla. They need to win against anybody.

"We had breakdowns and they cost us goals," St. Louis defenseman Chris Pronger said. "It's frustrating to lose to them because they're a rival in our conference. This is a game we've got to win." Nieuwendyk's first goal, at 17:11, sent St. Louis goalie Jamie

McLennan to the bench. Hull's second goal came on the first shot faced by Grant Fuhr, extending Dallas' lead to 6-3.

Islanders 1, Sharks 0
New York snapped a string of seven straight losses, winning at San Jose behind Tommy Salo's fifth shutout of the season, tying him for the league lead. It was his 14th career shutout.

Mike Watt scored the game's lone goal, taking Barry Richter's pass and beating Mike Vernon midway through the second period.

The Sharks, who opened the season with eight straight losses, have just six wins this season, fewest in the NHL.

Penguins 3, Lightning 2, OT
In Pittsburgh, Kevin Hatcher scored with 1:43 left in overtime to lift the Penguins over Tampa Bay.

Hatcher beat Corey Schwab to hand the Lightning their 13th loss in 15 games. Tampa Bay is 2-13 since a 6-2-1 streak ended on Nov. 10.

Hatcher's fifth goal of the season came seconds after a shot on an open net by Pittsburgh's Alexei Kovalev hit the goal post. The Penguins tied all seven of their previous overtime games this season.

Hurricanes 3, Oilers 0
Glen Wesley scored his 100th career goal and Arturs Irbe recorded his second consecutive shutout for Carolina.

The Southeast Division-leading Hurricanes are 6-1-2 in their last nine games and opened a season-high nine-point lead over the second-place Florida Panthers. The Oilers are winless in their last seven games and fell to 0-3-2 in the fifth of a seven-game road trip.

Irbe, who blanked the two-time defending Stanley Cup champion Detroit Red Wings 3-0 Saturday night, stopped 29 Edmonton shots for his 17th career shutout and fourth of the season. It was the first time Irbe has posted consecutive shutouts in eight NHL seasons.

TUESDAY'S NHL RESULTS:
Carolina 3, Edmonton 0
Pittsburgh 3, Tampa Bay 2, OT
Dallas 7, St. Louis 3
N.Y. Islanders 1, San Jose 0



EN GARDE — Tampa Bay's Chris Gratton (left) gives a hard check to Pittsburgh's Jan Hrdina during Tuesday night's game in Pittsburgh.

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	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
New Jersey	17	7	3	37	81	67
Philadelphia	13	9	6	32	78	64
Pittsburgh	12	7	7	31	78	69
N.Y. Rangers	11	11	2	24	72	72
N.Y. Islanders	11	18	0	22	70	83
Northeast						
Buffalo	15	5	5	35	73	45
Toronto	16	11	2	34	86	83
Boston	12	8	6	30	67	51
Ottawa	13	10	3	29	77	64
Montreal	8	16	5	21	65	85
Southeast						
Carolina	14	11	5	33	80	67
Florida	9	11	6	24	66	74
Washington	8	16	3	19	57	74
Tampa Bay	8	19	2	18	63	105

GA	Home	Away	Div
67	7-3-3	10-4-0	7-2-1
74	7-4-3	6-5-3	3-4-3
69	4-2-5	8-5-2	3-2-3
83	6-5-2	4-4-5	2-2-4
85	6-10-0	3-8-0	2-4-0
Northwest			
43	8-3-7	7-4-3	6-1-1
85	9-4-2	7-7-0	4-4-0
51	5-3-4	7-5-2	3-2-1
64	7-6-1	6-4-2	1-3-1
85	7-4-1	1-8-4	1-5-1
Pacific			
67	8-4-4	6-5-1	1-0-2
74	5-6-2	4-5-4	2-0-2
74	4-7-2	4-9-1	2-2-1
105	4-10-1	4-9-1	1-3-1

Wisconsin enters Top 25 Broncos, Vikings send nine each to Pro Bowl squads

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Wisconsin didn't always look like a Top 25 team against Texas. However, the No. 23 Badgers played just well enough to justify their first ranking in four years.

Wisconsin shook off a dismal start and defeated Texas 65-62 Tuesday night behind 21 points from Sean Mason.

In other Top 25 games, No. 18 Oklahoma State routed Houston Baptist 114-62, and No. 19 Auburn downed Wofford 79-51.

It was the eighth straight victory for Wisconsin (10-1) and the first time coach Dick Bennett has led a ranked team in 14 years as a head coach in Division I.

"We were about as unheralded as any team could be, but we've played a good schedule so we should feel good about this because it was earned," Bennett said.

Both teams shot poorly in the first half, which ended with Texas holding a 25-24 lead. Wisconsin was 9-for-30 from the field, while the Longhorns were 8-for-20.

"The first half was just a war," Texas coach Rick Barnes said. "I don't think either team was looking to hold the ball. It was just that we were both looking hard to try and get the shots we wanted."

Wisconsin was outrebounded 37-28 but Texas committed 17 turnovers, leading to 12 Wisconsin points.

The Badgers committed just seven turnovers and held Texas 7-

inside and setting screens for Mason.

"I think we wore them down in the second half," Mason said. "They started crying about the screens. You know you've got them when they start complaining to the referees."

Wisconsin took its first lead of the second half at 50-49 on Mason's 3-point shot with 6:20 left. Mason tied it at 56 with 2:59 remaining and then hit two free throws to start a 10-1 run that put the Badgers up 64-57 with 33 seconds left.

The Badgers made seven of 10 free throws in the last three minutes to clinch the victory.

Texas had a chance to tie in the final seconds after William Clay made three foul shots to pull the Longhorns within 65-62.

Texas fouled on the inbound pass, and Wisconsin's Charlie Willis missed both free throws with 16 seconds left to give the Longhorns a final shot. However, Clay's 3-point attempt with 1.2 seconds left bounced off the front of the rim.

"I shoot 200 3s a day and I feel I've got to hit those shots," said Clay, who led Texas with 14 points.

Wisconsin was outrebounded 37-28 but Texas committed 17 turnovers, leading to 12 Wisconsin points.

The Badgers committed just seven turnovers and held Texas 7-

foot center Chris Mihm to eight points and six rebounds despite not starting a player over 6-8.

No. 18 Oklahoma St. 114
In Stillwater, Oklahoma, Adrian Peterson and Desmond Mason each scored 27 points as Oklahoma State overwhelmed its NAIA opponent.

Glendon Alexander, playing just his second game since becoming eligible after transferring from Arkansas, added 19 points for the Cowboys (6-2).

Gabe Rapier scored 16 points for Houston Baptist (8-1), which made only one field goal in the first seven minutes.

No. 19 Auburn 79, Wofford 51
Chris Porter scored 14 points and the Tigers dominated the boards against visiting Wofford.

Auburn's 52-30 rebounding advantage helped the Tigers overcome a poor shooting night. They shot only 41 percent from the field, including 5-for-20 from 3-point range.

Scott Pohlman and Doc Robinson each scored 12 points for Auburn (10-0), which is off to its best start in 40 years. Robinson also had six rebounds and six assists. Ian Chadwick scored 26 points for Wofford (3-5), including six 3-pointers.

TUESDAY'S TOP 25 RESULTS:
No. 18 Ok. St. 114, Houston Baptist 62
No. 19 Auburn 79, Wofford 51
No. 23 Wisconsin 65, Texas 62

NEW YORK (AP) — Jerry Rice, who missed almost all of 1997 with the knee injuries, made it back to the U.S. National Football League's Pro Bowl yesterday, selected for the season-ending all-star game along with a player who some say may break his records, Minnesota rookie Randy Moss.

Not surprisingly, the Denver Broncos and Minnesota Vikings, who lead their conferences with 13-1 records, placed the most players on the team, nine each.

The Vikings on the roster for the February 7 game in Honolulu are: Moss, receiver Chris Carter, tackle Todd Stueff, guard Randall McDaniel, center Jeff Christy, quarterback Randall Cunningham, defensive tackle John Randle, inside linebacker Ed McClellan and kicker Gary Anderson.

Moss, the only rookie on either squad, is a starter, along with Randall McDaniel, Christy and Randle.

The nine Broncos are: quarterback John Elway, running back

Terrell Davis, wide receiver Ed McCaffrey, offensive tackle Tony Jones, center Tom Nalen, tight end Shannon Sharpe, linebacker Bill Romanowski, safety Steve Atwater, and kicker Jason Elam.

McCaffrey, Sharpe, Elway, Davis and Atwater are starters.

Among the notable absentees is Green Bay's Brett Favre, the three-time league Most Valuable Player Award winner, who was beaten out at quarterback in the NFC by San Francisco's Steve Young. Rice's teammate, Cunningham and Atlanta's Chris Chandler.

Also missing are Dallas's star running back Emmitt Smith, beaten out by Detroit's Barry Sanders, Atlanta's Jamal Anderson and San Francisco's Garrison Hearst.

Also among the missing is 49ers wide receiver Terrell Owens, who is averaging 16.1 yards a catch to 13.6 for Rice and has 12 touchdowns to Rice's seven, and linebacker Zach Thomas of Miami, leader of the league's top defense.

They did, winning four straight and eight of nine. Their 21-16 victory at Miami on Sunday night put them on a different, unfamiliar level.

"With this schedule and starting out 0-2, I think this team knew improving on last year is important," Parcells said. "We had that, but these people have been shooting at us now. People are gearing up for us, that team was gearing up for us Sunday night."

"I think my team at least has the mentality now to try to play against that kind of team in that environment, the effort was there the whole way," he said.

NFL Individual Leaders

AFC										
Quarterbacks	Att	Com	Yds	TD	Int	Pass	Yds	LG	TD	
Testaverde, W.F.	371	228	2895	23	6	342	1596	44	48	
Elway, Den.	284	171	2317	18	8	340	1442	33	36	
Flutie, Buf.	316	188	2491	19	10	305	176	2890	21	
O'Donnell, Cin.	343	212	2216	15	4	277	167	2024	12	
Brodell, Jac.	354	208	2601	20	9	297	189	2242	14	
Gannon, K.C.	338	199	2228	18	4	507	317	3806	21	
Bledsoe, R.E.	401	263	3633	20	14	441	241	3027	21	
McNair, Ten.	410	244	2704	12	9	383	173	2178	11	
Marino, Fla.	463	266	2822	18	12	250	151	1823	7	
Moore, Sea.	258	145	1632	11	8	379	201	2518	18	
NFC										
Quarterbacks	Att	Com	Yds	TD	Int	Pass	Yds	LG	TD	
Cunningham, Min.	340	220	3259	29	9	342	1596	44	48	
S. Young, S.F.	462	282	3615	22	10	340	1442	33	36	
Chandler, Atl.	305	176	2890	21	12	305	176	2890	21	
Alfonso, Dal.	277	167	2024	12	4	277	167	2024	12	
Bennett, Car.	297	189	2242	14	11	297	189	2242	14	
Favre, G.B.	507	317	3806	27	21	507	317	3806	27	
T. Green, Was.	441	241	3027	21	9	441	241	3027	21	
Bach, Det.	383	173	2178	11	8	383	173	2178	11	
Kramer, Chi.	250	151	1823	7	7	250	151	1823	7	
Diller, T.R.	379	201	2518	18	12	379	201	2518	18	
AFC										
Running Backs	Att	Yds	LG	TD	Pass	Yds	LG	TD	TD	
Davis, Den.	347	1801	52	70	21	347	1801	52	70	
Faulk, Ind.	293	1228	42	68	6	293	1228	42	68	
E. George, Ten.	319	1210	38	31	4	319	1210	38	31	
Martin, W.F.	320	1149	34	60	8	320	1149	34	60	
Dillon, Cin.	248	1040	43	66	4	248	1040	43	66	
Watters, Sea.	48	380	13.6	58	5	48	380	13.6	58	
J. Smith, Jac.	72	1100	15.3	72	8	72	1100	15.3	72	
K. Johnson, W.F.	70	990	14.1	40	9	70	990	14.1	40	
Chabot, W.F.	68	1009	14.8	63	7	68	1009	14.8	63	
T. Brown, Oak.	65	824	12.7	49	7	65	824	12.7	49	
NFC										
Running Backs	Att	Yds	LG	TD	Pass	Yds	LG	TD	TD	
J. Anderson, S.F.	362	1946	54	48	12	362	1946	54	48	
Heuser, S.F.	273	1592	43	56	7	273	1592	43	56	
Sanders, Det.	299	1335	45	73	4	299	1335	45	73	
E. Smith, Dal.	284	1155	41	52	11	284	1155	41	52	
R. Smith, Min.	215	1013	47	34	6	215	1013	47	34	
Hurnst, Ariz.	237	952	40	32	4	237	952	40	32	
Dunn, T.R.	208	994	43	50	2	208	994	43	50	
Staley, Phil.	224	941	40	46	4	224	941	40	46	
Brown, W.F.-G	197	848	43	45	4	197	848	43	45	
Allen, Was.	148	700	47	45	3	148	700	47	45	
AFC										
Punters	No	Yds	LG	Avg	TD	No	Yds	LG	TD	
Hester, Ten.	58	2788	71	48.1	1	58	2788	71	48.1	
Rosen, Den.	57	2869	76	46.8	8	57	2869	76	46.8	
Garotnick, Ind.	68	3089	62	45.4	4	68	3089	62	45.4	
Barker, Jac.	70	3178	65	45.4	1	70	3178	65	45.4	
Tupai, R.E.	63	2840	64	45.1	4	63	2840	64	45.1	
Johnson, Cin.	69	3083	69	44.7	3	69	3083	69	44.7	
Miller, Pit.	69	3082	73	44.7	3	69	3082	73	44.7	
K. Richardson, Bal.	78	3451	65	44.2	3	78	3451	65	44.2	
Bailey, Ind.	18	159	8.8	33.0	0	18	159	8.8	33.0	
NFC										
Punters	No	Yds	LG	Avg	TD	No	Yds	LG	TD	
Royals, H.O.	97	4148	63	42.7	1	97	4148	63	42.7	
Maynard, W.F.-G	92	4148	63	45.1	0	92	4148	63	45.1	
M. Turk, Was.	79	3538	69	45.8	0	79	3538	69	45.8	
Tuten, S.F.	84	3229	64	44.1	0	84	3229	64	44.1	
Gowin, Dal.	67	2955	65	44.3	0	67	2955	65	44.3	
Berger, Min.	46	2020	65	44.0	0	46	2020	65	44.0	
Jett, Det.	55	2414	68	43.9	0	55	2414	68	43.9	
Lauden, G.B.	54	2439	72	45.1	0	54	2439	72	45.1	
Kelly, S.F.	51	2172	64	42.5	0	51	2172	64	42.5	
AFC										
Kickoff Ret.	No	Yds	LG	TD	TD	No	Yds	LG	TD	
Harris, Bal.	28	794	28.4	95	1	28	794	28.4	95	
Harce, Cin.	25	589	26.8	90	1	25	589	26.8	90	
Rack, Cin.	45	1165	25.9	97	1	45	1165	25.9	97	
Wolston, Den.	39	997	25.4	57	0	39	997	25.4	57	
Avery, Min.	40	1000	25.0	55	0	40	1000	25.0	55	
NFC										
Kickoff Ret.	No	Yds	LG	TD	TD	No	Yds	LG	TD	
Fair, Det.	50	1404	28.1	105	2	50	1404	28.1	105	
Preston, G.B.	50	1344	26.9	101	2	50	1344	26.9	101	
Dwight, Atl.	31	820	26.5	93	2	31	820	26.5	93	
Kathie, Dal.	25	621	24.8	42	0	25	621	24.8	42	
Mathews, Chi.	57	1412	24.8	94	2	57	1412	24.8	94	
AFC										
Kicking	Pkt	Fg	LG	Pts	Pts	Kicking	Pkt	Fg	LG	Pts
Anderson, Min.	33-33	33-33	52	127	127	Anderson, Min.	33-33	33-33	52	127
Longwell, G.B.	37-38	25-28	48	124	124	Longwell, G.B.	37-38	25-28	48	124
Cunningham, Dal.	37-37	24-24	51	117	117	Cunningham, Dal.	37-37	24-24	51	117
Anderson, Det.	43-44	26-26	53	117	117	Anderson, Det.	43-44	26-26	53	117
Ransom, Sea.	24-26	27-31	51	106	106	Ransom, Sea.	24-26	27-31	51	106
Bickley, S.F.	43-45	15-23	46	88	88	Bickley, S.F.	43-45	15-23	46	88
Hickley, R.D.	26-28	19-20	50	68	68	Hickley, R.D.	26-28	19-20	50	68
Dufaine, W.F.-G	26-26	19-23	51	68	68	Dufaine, W.F.-G	26-26	19-23	51	68
Husod, T.R.	23-24	18-22	52	57	57	Husod, T.R.	23-24	18-22	52	57
Jaeger, Chi.	23-24	18-22	52	57	57	Jaeger, Chi.	23-24	18-22	52	57
Wagner, S.F.	23-23	18-24	57	57	57	Wagner, S.F.	23-23	18-24	57	57

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Sports Editors

Joe Hoffman & Ori Lewis

No instant
replay for
NFL playoffs

NEW YORK (AP) — Controversial calls by officials have made it a good bet that instant replay will be back next year. It won't happen, however, for this season's playoffs.

The league's rule-making competition committee, in a conference call Tuesday, voted 7-1 against bringing replay back this year. Six of the eight members said they would favor bringing it back next season, and a seventh said he would consider it.

"Different people gave different reasons," said commissioner Paul Tagliabue. The vote was taken in response to a series of bad calls over a two-week period that included the Thanksgiving weekend.

One gave New England a victory over Buffalo; another came on the winning touchdown in the Seahawks-Jets game on Dec. 6 in which replay showed that the Jets' Vinny Testaverde clearly came up short of the goal line. The controversy even extended to the coin toss at the start of overtime in the Pittsburgh-Detroit game in which the Steelers' Jerome Bettis said he called "tails," and referee Phil Luckett said he heard "heads."

More news and statistics from the NFL on Page 18.

Maccabi set to battle Cibona

By BRIAN FREEMAN

Maccabi Tel Aviv closes out the first stage of the EuroLeague tonight with a road match against its former coach Vinko Jelovac and his Cibona Zagreb squad.

Maccabi only needs to lose by less than 20 points to the Croatians in order to secure third place in Group B, but it actually appears much preferable for Tel Aviv to finish fourth (see story below).

In any case, a victory will not be easy for the Israelis, even though Maccabi trounced Cibona 76-57 in their October matchup in Yot Elihu.

Tel Aviv is bringing only nine eligible players to the game. New teammates David Benoit and Zdravko Radulovic are still ineligible for European play, while Doron Sheffer has been added to the injured list which already includes Borko Radovic.

Oded Katash is expected to return from injury to play tonight, although it is doubtful he will be at full strength. Katash sparked Maccabi to victory over the Croatians in the October matchup against Cibona by leading all scorers with 20 points and 5 assists in his return to European play.

The depleted squad means that Victor Alexander will have to bear more of his regular share of

the offensive burden and that others will have to step up their contributions, as Guy Goodes and Gur Shelef did last week in the 78-59 home victory over Red Star Belgrade.

Another reason Maccabi is likely headed for a tough match is that the Croatians are an improved team. They started out the EuroLeague with a 1-5 record, but have won two of their last three games, including an impressive 76-70 home win last week over Efes Pilsen.

Cibona is paced by Gordan Giricek (16.0 points per game, 42.9% from three-point range) and Ken Atkins (11.3 scoring average), while the bulk of the rebounding is done by Nikola Prkacin, who averages 7.1 boards a contest.

Cibona will have to get more help on the glass to win, since Maccabi's 32-17 rebounding advantage in the Yot Elihu matchup was a decisive factor in the Israeli victory.

The game is scheduled to be televised live on Channel 1 starting at 9:30 p.m.

EuroLeague Group B				
Team	W	L	T	PTS
Panathinaikos	10	10	0	20
Efes Pilsen	10	7	3	17
Maccabi TA	9	4	5	13
Cibona Zagreb	9	3	6	12
Maritsa	9	3	6	12
Red Star Belgrade	9	1	8	10

'Not bad' draw for Mac. Haifa

By OFER RONEN-ABELS

Maccabi Haifa will take on Russian side Lokomotiv Moscow in the Cup Winners Cup quarterfinals in March next year.

The draw, held yesterday in Geneva, was seen as favorable to Haifa, as Lokomotiv is generally considered less dangerous than Lazio, Chelsea and Real Mallorca.

Haifa, which surprised many European clubs by reaching this stage of the tournament for the first time in local soccer history, will face the Russian team in Moscow on March 4 and return to play the second leg at home on March 18.

Maccabi Haifa's captain Arik Benado said yesterday, "We wanted to draw the Greeks (Panionios) or the Norwegians (Vaalrenga) but drawing Lokomotiv is not bad either."

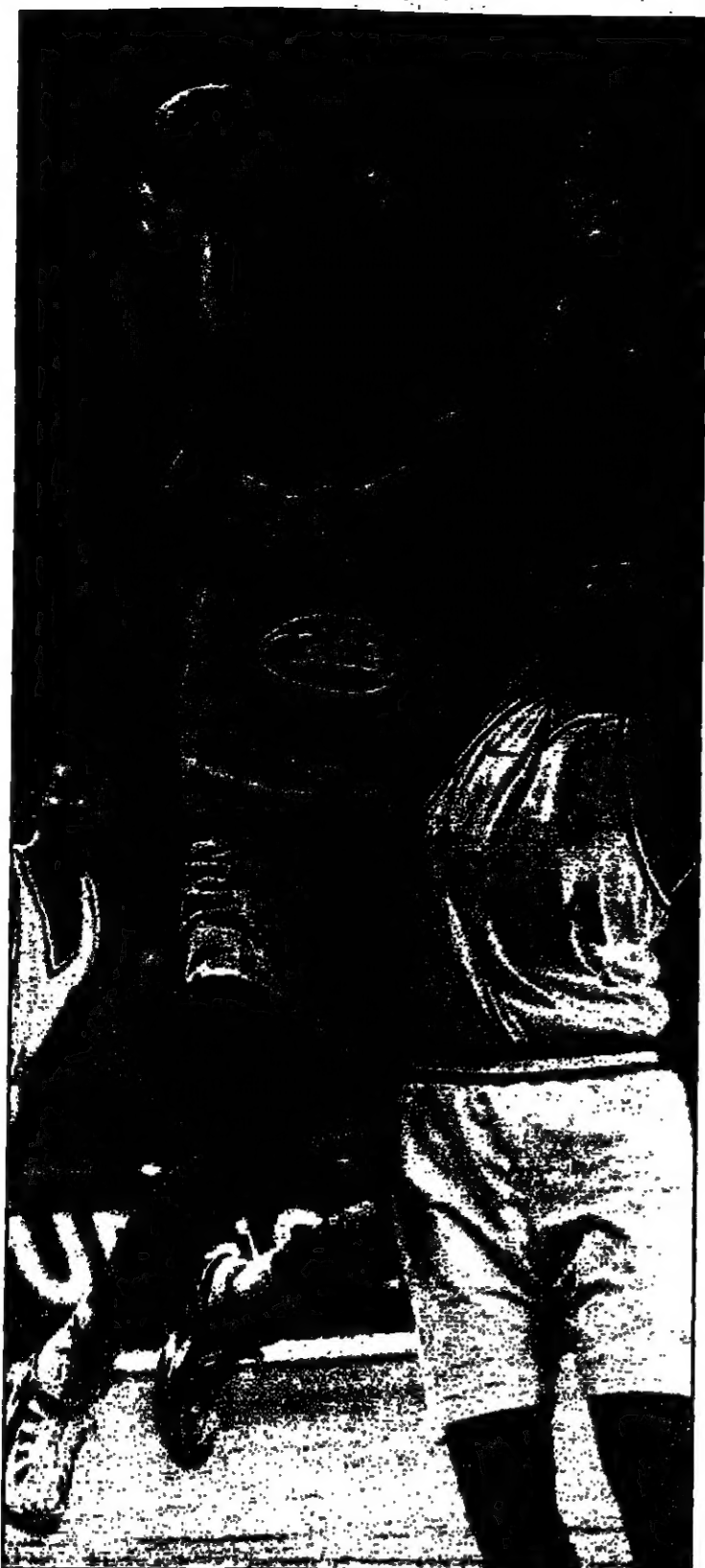
"At least," continued Benado, "we managed to avoid the big clubs."

On the prospect of a trip to Moscow, Benado said, "The Russians are facing a three-month break period which should stand to our advantage. We'll try and get a good result in Moscow in order to bring the deciding match back home."

Lokomotiv is the smallest club out of the three that come from the Russian capital (Spartak, Dynamo and CSKA) and have entered this year's competition after losing in last season's cup final to Spartak who won the double.

Haifa's top scorer this season, Alon Mizrahi, said "Lokomotiv are a very good side that reached the semifinals of the tournament last season."

Maccabi Tel Aviv's striker Alexander Kosolapov, who played for Lokomotiv before signing for the Israeli side this summer, said yesterday, "My former club has no star players. They have good players but not in the caliber of Haifa's Yossi Benayoun."



HANG TIME — Oded Katash is expected to return from injury tonight in the contest against Cibona Zagreb. (AP)

For Maccabi TA tonight, to lose is to win

By BRIAN FREEMAN

There is something wrong with the system when it is actually better for a team to lose than win.

But that is the situation in which Maccabi finds itself tonight, whether they want to admit it or not.

Back in the good old days of the EuroLeague, when there was only 10 games among six teams to reach the championship match — rather than the current system where 16 games are played among 24 teams merely to reach the Final 16 — each game was a do-or-die struggle.

But when the powers that be decided to expand the competition to increase interest — and obviously make more money — the "purity" of the struggle was compromised.

If Maccabi wants the easiest path to the Final Four, it should lose by more than 20 points tonight (at least 26 if Maccabi beats Red Star Belgrade tonight) so that it will finish third and not fourth.

That would give Maccabi both a more realistic shot at second place after the next stage — with the accompanying home-court advantage in the best-of-three Final 16 series — and less danger of falling below fourth and being eliminated from the competition altogether.

A third place finish means that Tel Aviv will have almost no chance to catch Efes Pilsen for second place in the six games of the competition's next stage, especially since it is three games behind the Turks and has already lost twice to them.

A third place finish also puts in danger the prospect of finishing in fifth place — and thus failing to make the Final 16 — because the "bottom" three teams of Group A with which Maccabi would be paired are not that weak.

Since Tel Aviv would have to face those three teams twice, the bottom clubs — Varese, Victoria and Saratov — would have plenty of chances to overtake Maccabi, which currently has the same record as Victoria and is only one game up on Varese.

Ironically, if Maccabi finishes in fourth and has to play the top three teams in Group A, the danger of falling below fourth — and thus out of the Final 16 picture — would be real.

That is because in that case Maccabi would have better records

than the two teams under it and would also almost assuredly hold the tie-breaker advantage over them.

Since those two worse teams would not have the chance to play Maccabi again and would have to play the same three tougher clubs, Tel Aviv would have to face, it is unlikely they could make up the lost ground.

But Tel Aviv would stand more of a chance of capturing second place (it is currently only two games behind Group A's second place team).

Although they would have to play the three top teams in Group A twice, at least victories over them would boost the chances of finishing second and earning home-court advantage in the Final 16 series.

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EGYPT
Eilat 20/8

EUROPE WEATHER TODAY

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

ISRAEL CITIES					
City	Today	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
	High	Low	High	Low	
Ashdod	14/57	25/76	16/61	24/74	16/61
Beersheva	15/61	24/76	16/61	23/72	16/61
Dead Sea	10/55	74/44	10/55	21/70	10/55
Elav	20/59	24/76	20/59	24/76	20/59
Haifa	17/52	24/76	17/52	24/76	17/52
Jerusalem	15/58	24/76	15/58	23/72	15/58
Katmon	13/55	23/72	13/55	23/72	13/55
Netanya	17/52	24/76	17/52	24/76	17/52
Tel Aviv	17/52	24/76	17/52	24/76	17/52
Tiberias	17/52	24/76	17/52	24/76	17/52

Weather (W): sunny, partly cloudy, cloudy, showers, thunderstorms, rain, snow, fog, snow, fog.

INTERNATIONAL CITIES				
City	Today	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	High	Low	High	Low
Amsterdam	12/53	54/63	12/53	54/63
Beijing	14/57	25/76	14/57	25/76
Bombay	28/82	24/76	28/82	24/76
Buenos Aires	12/53	54/63	12/53	54/63
Calcutta	28/82	24/76	28/82	24/76
Chicago	33/72	23/72	33/72	23/72
Frankfurt	14/57	25/76	14/57	25/76
Hong Kong	22/71	21/70	22/71	21/70
London	11/52	54/63	11/52	54/63
Los Angeles	29/84	14/57	29/84	14/57
Madrid	16/61	57/78	16/61	57/78
Mexico City	18/64	59/80	18/64	59/80
Moscow	32/77	15/58	32/77	15/58
New York	48/68	10/55	48/68	10/55
Paris	14/57	25/76	14/57	25/76
Prague	14/57	25/76	14/57	25/76
Rio de Janeiro	29/84	21/70	29/84	21/70
Rome	12/53	54/63	12/53	54/63
Sydney	24/76	21/70	24/76	21/70
Tokyo	11/52	54/63	11/52	54/63
Toronto	22/71	21/70	22/71	21/70
Vancouver	54/63	32/77	54/63	32/77
Washington	10/55	12/53	10/55	12/53
Zurich	9/48	43/59	9/48	43/59

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